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ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.



TEACHING LITTLE CHILDREN.





THE GIFT FROM GOD

The Catholic Church

THE TEACHER OF MANKIND

FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF

THE CATHOLIC PARENT IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH, THE
CATHOLIC YOUTH IN THE STEPS OF JESUS, AND THE
CATHOLIC CHILD AT MOTHER'S KNEE.

EMBRACING

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- VI. The Channels of Grace, or the Sacraments of the Church.
- VII. The Sacraments or the Teaching of Catholic Truth By Signs and Ceremonies.
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The Teaching of the Faith by means of Questions and Answers.

Selected from the Works of

THE MOST EMINENT AUTHORITIES OF THE CHURCH.

SUMPTUOUSLY ILLUSTRATED

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CENSOR.

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The Channels of Grace.

A comprehensive exposition of the Teachings of the Church regarding her sacraments, and the rites, objects and ceremonies through which they are administered.

WE shall treat of the Sacraments and Sacramentals of the Catholic Church, in a brief, clear and popular form, giving the reader a view of the whole government of the Church, its hierarchy, from the Sovereign Pontiff to the tonsured clerk serving in the sanctuary, of its public worship, that august sacrifice which has, and can have, no equal on earth, and which, in its imposing liturgy and ritual, commands the respect and awe of all.

We shall see how the Church, in her Sacraments, guides the Christian from the cradle until the earth closes above his grave—nor leaves it then to forget him, but is mindful of her children, even when the world, that flatters and seduces, has ceased to think of the departed. And in her Sacramentals are further aids, showing how she takes occasion, from all around us, to raise our thoughts to heaven and secure the one thing necessary.

“It is difficult,” says Father Faber, “to describe the Sacraments. If an angel were to bear us from this globe which we inhabit, and carry us to some distant star, which God may have adorned as a dwelling-place for some other species of reasonable creatures, we should be struck with the novelty and peculiarity of the scenery around us. Some of its features might remind us of the scenery of earth, although with characteristic differences; while other features would be entirely new, entirely unlike anything we had ever seen before, either in color, form, or composition. This is very much the effect produced upon us when we come to learn the Catholic doctrine about the Sacraments. It introduces us into a new world. It gives us new ideas. It is more than a discovery, for it amounts to a revelation. The Sacraments are part of the new world introduced into creation by the Incarnation of

the Eternal Word, and therefore are an essential part of creation as it was eternally pre-ordained by God. Yet they are quite distinct from any other province in creation. The Sacraments of the Old Law were but shadows of the Sacraments of the Gospel. The Sacraments of the New Law are created things which have been devised and fabricated by our Blessed Lord himself. The Eucharist was foreshadowed by the Paschal Lamb; the Sacrament of Order, by the consecration of priests; and Penance by the legal purifications of the tabernacle. There was no shadows of Confirmation, because it is the Sacrament of the fullness of grace, and so can belong only to the Gospel dispensation. Neither was there any shadow of Extreme Unction, because it is the immediate preparation for the entrance of the soul into glory, and there was no entrance into glory for any human soul till Jesus had risen and ascended. Neither could Matrimony be a Sacrament under the Old Law, because the Word had not yet actually wedded our human nature; and the sacramentality of marriage consists in its being the figure of those transcendent nuptials of the Sacred Humanity.

“What, then, shall we call these Sacraments? They are not persons, yet they seem to be scarcely things: I mean that they seem to be something more than things. We want another word for them, another name, and cannot find one. They are powers, lives, shrines, marvels, divine hiding-places, centres of heavenly power, supernatural magnificences, engraftings of heaven upon earth, fountains of grace, mysterious efficacies, marriages of matter and spirit, beautiful complication of God and man. Each Sacrament is a species by itself. Each has some specialty which is at once its excellence and its mystery. The pre-eminence of Baptism consists in its remission of original sin and of the pains due it. The pre-eminence of Confirmation resides in the vastness of the succors of actual grace which it brings with it, as we see in the fortitude which it conferred upon the Apostles and which the Eucharist had not conferred; the Sacrament of Penance can claim the privilege of being the most necessary of all Sacraments to those who have been baptized, and of the capability of reiterated remission of mortal sin, which Baptism can not claim.

Extreme Unction excels Penance in the greater copiousness of its graces. The excellence of Order consists in its placing men in the singularly sublime state of being domestic ministers of Christ. Matrimony has a glory of its own in its signification of the union of our Lord with the Church. The pre-eminence of the Eucharist resides, as Saint Thomas says, in the very substance of the Sacrament, seeing that it is, as it were, the Sacrament of all the other Sacraments—the centre of them, the cause of them, the end of them, and the harmony of them. All are because of it, and are subordinate to its amazing supremacy.

“These Sacraments were designed by our Lord himself, and were instituted by Him with varying degrees of detail as to matter and form in various Sacraments; and yet, saving their substance, He has given His Church very extensive power over them, because they are so intimately connected with its unity. We see the exercises of this power in the bread of the Eucharist, in the impediments of Marriage, and in the varieties of Order in the Latin and Greek Churches. The Sacraments are institutions which illustrate at once the magnificence of God’s dominion over His creation, and also the capability of creatures to be elevated by Him to astonishing sublimities, far beyond the merit and due of nature; and this elevability of creatures is one of the most glorious manifestations of the liberty of God.

“The Sacraments are not mere signs of grace, but causes of it. They cause grace in us physically by the omnipotence of God, which exists in them as if it were their own proper virtue and energy; for the omnipotence of God exists so specially in the Sacraments that if, by any possibility, God were not omnipresent. He would, nevertheless, be present in the Sacraments.

“Strictly speaking, we do not call the Sacraments miraculous. They have laws of their own. So perhaps have miracles. But the laws of the Sacraments are revealed to us. Their action follows rules, and is, under fitting circumstances, invariable. Their order and immutability are two of their most striking features; and this distinguishes them from miracles. They are processes, and in this, also, they are unlike what we popularly term miracles. But so far as they are wonder-working, so far as their

results call forth our astonishment, so far as their effects are beyond the power of nature, so far as their completeness and their instantaneousness are concerned, so far as the revolution they accomplish and the transmutation they make are beyond the strength of common grace, so far as their success is in their secret divinity, so far we may call their operation miraculous. It is certainly in the highest degree mysterious. Their use of matter seems to point to a philosophy of matter and spirit far deeper than any which has yet been taught. It awakens trains of thought which carry us rapidly into speculations which are too high for us, yet which give us now and then unsystematic glances into the secrets of creation. The form of the Sacraments betokens a mysterious grandeur in language, reminding us of God's peculiar way of working by efficacious words, a characteristic which doubtless is connected in some hidden manner with the Eternal Generation of the Word. The invisible sacerdotal power which is necessary to the validity of so many of the Sacraments is another of their splendors, while the Sacraments which do not need it imply that latent priesthood which abides in all Christians, and which is an emanation of our Saviour's own priesthood 'after the order of Melchisedec.' The jurisdiction required for the administration of so many of the Sacraments, and especially for valid absolution, is a participation in those regal powers which belong to the kingdom of Christ—to the Church in its character of a monarchy. The power of the Church itself to limit the validity of a Sacrament, as in the case of reserved sins in confession and of impediments in Matrimony, is another feature in the Sacraments which enhances their mysterious character, while it exalts that lordship of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus which has been so copiously imparted to the Church. All these things are points for meditation, which can not fail to fill the soul with reverence and love, and to unite it more closely with God, by making us feel how the natural is hemmed in with the divine, and with what awful reality we are always lying in the arms of God, with our liberty held up, secured, and at once imprisoned and set at large by all this exuberance of supernatural interventions.

“The grace of the Sacraments is another subject for pious won-

der. The special grace of each Sacrament, peculiar to itself and accomplishing a peculiar end, is a marvel in itself. Just as the sun brings out the blossoms, and paints their variegated leaves in parti-colored patterns, though the whole leaf is supplied with the same sap through the same veins, so does the Son of Justice work in the special grace of the Sacraments. How He determines them to such various effects is a secret hidden from us. The Sacraments have probably spiritual laws of their own, which are neither gratuitous nor arbitrary, but founded in some intrinsic fitness of things which results from the character of God. The special grace of each Sacrament seems to be almost a visible approach of God to the individual soul, to accomplish some particular end, or confirm some definite vocation, or interfere in some distinct crisis. It is not His usual way of working. It is not merely a general augmentation of sanctifying grace, an infusion of livelier faith, of keener hope, or of more burning charity. It is something more intimate between God and the soul, more personal, more full of reference to the individual case. Again, we must not omit to reflect on the inexhaustibleness of the grace of the Sacraments. It takes an immense heroism, like martyrdom, to come near to the grace of a Sacrament. Even martyrdom does not supersede Baptism or confession, if they can be had. No one can tell how much grace lies in a single Sacrament. In a single communion lies all grace, for in it is the author and fountain of all grace; and, if the theological opinion be true, that there is no grace in any of His members which has not actually been first in our Lord Himself, then all the grace of all the world lies in one communion, to be unsealed and enjoyed by the degree of fervor which we bring. The saints have said that a single communion was enough to make a saint. Who can tell if any created soul has ever yet drained any single Sacrament of the whole amount of grace which was contained in it simply by virtue of its being a Sacrament? I should be inclined to think, from manifold analogies both of nature and of grace, that no Sacrament had even been duly emptied of its grace, not even in the Communion of our Blessed Lady.

“No Sacrament is content to confine itself to the conferring of

its special grace. There is always an exuberance about it, giving more than is asked, doing more than was promised, reaching further than was expected. This is a characteristic of all God's works. His magnificence is confined in every one of them, and is forever bursting its bonds, and carrying light, and beauty, and fertility, and blessing, far beyond the shrine in which it had been localized. But the perfection of God, which above all others the Sacraments appear to represent, is His magnificence. They belong to this attribute in a very special and peculiar way. Hence, there is about them a redundancy of grace, a prodigality of power, a profuseness and lavishness of benediction, which go beyond the ordinary laws of the world of grace. Moreover, besides this exuberance there is an agility about the Sacraments which is most worthy of note. Sometimes, if need be, one will do the work of another. Those which have no office to communicate first grace and justify the sinner, will do so under certain circumstances. Communion will forgive, Extreme Unction will absolve; not ordinarily, but when there is necessity for it, and the fitting disposition. We can not think without surprise of this power of transforming themselves, and of passing into each other and supplying for each other, which within certain limits the Sacraments possess. Furthermore, the rivers of grace in the Sacraments never run dry. Consider the multitude of Sacraments administered daily in the Church. Picture to yourself the wonderfulness of grace and its supernatural excellence, and then imagine the quantity of it drawn out of the eternal fountains for the well-being of the world. It is an overwhelming thought. Grace is not only more abundant in the Sacraments, and more nimble, but it is also more patient. Grace waits longer inside the Sacraments than out of them. They seem to detain it, to hold heaven down upon earth with a sweet force, and so to multiply the occasion and prolong the opportunities of men.

“The character which some of the Sacraments confer, also belongs to their grace. It is a revelation to us of the divine impetuosity and energy of the Sacraments. Amid the ardors of heaven and in the dazzling splendors of the Beatific Vision, the mystic signets, the inexplicable characters of the Sacraments,

three in number, as if adumbrating the Three Divine Persons, shine forth as distinct beauties, and brighten through eternity. The character of Baptism is, as it were, the finger-mark of the Eternal Father on the soul. The character of Order glistens like the unfailing unction of the priesthood of the Eternal Son. The character of Confirmation is the deep mark, which the fires of the Holy Ghost burned in, the pressure of His tremendous fortitude, which was lain upon us, and yet we perished not, so tenderly and so gently did He touch us. In the wild fury of the tempestuous fires of hell the same characters glow terribly. They are indestructible even there, fiery shames, intolerable disgraces, distinct fountains of special agony forever and forever.

“To these reflections on the grace of the Sacraments we must not fail to add a due consideration of the doctrine of intention. What things can be more purely divine than these Sacraments? Yet see how sensible they are to human touch! It is as if the very delicacy of their divine fabric made them more liable to human impressions. They are jealous of their powers. They do not need our active co-operation, so much as our permission. They require obstacles to be removed, but not assistance to be conferred. They work, as we say in theology, by the force of their own work, not by the energy of the recipient. This is their peculiarity. It is this which distinguishes them from other means of grace. They have reason to be jealous of so magnificent a distinction. Yet, in spite of all this, they are so sensitive to the touch of our fervor, that they unlock fresh and fresh graces according as we press them, as if in their love and their likeness to God they were delighted to be pressed, to be solicited, and to be importuned. They are also so delicate and so susceptible that they are at the mercy of our intentions. The very thought of this makes us tremble. We could almost wish it were not so. To be so fragile, while they are so exceedingly strong, is not this a surprise and a perplexity, not seldom, too, a sorrow and a dread? It seems to show that they are purely things of heaven, exotics upon earth, or weapons of omnipotence becoming brittle when they are plunged suddenly among human actions. Baptism can justify the child whose reason has not dawned. Extreme Unction can deal with

the relics of sin in a sinner who lies insensible. Such independent power have these masterful Sacraments. Yet are they in bondage to our intention. They must be human acts, if they are to be divine ones also. They are not mere charms, or spells, or sleight of hand. They have magic about them, but it is only that magic of incredible love in which God has clothed them with such resplendent beauty. Nothing, as I think, demonstrates the divinity of the Sacraments more evidently than this exquisite sensitiveness to human touch.

“Now look out upon the great laboring world, the world of human actions and endurances. It is not possible to measure the influence which is being exercised upon the world at this moment by the Sacraments. They are penetrating the great mass of mankind like the network of veins and arteries in a living body. They are being the causes of millions of actions, and they are hindering the consequences of millions of other actions. They are weaving good, and unweaving evil, incessantly. The roots of great events, which grow up and tower in history, are perhaps fixed in some secret Sacrament or other. The silent and orderly revolutions of the Church are often moulded in them. Society would hardly credit to what an extent it is held together by them. The influence of a single reception of a Sacrament may be handed down for generations; and the making of the destinies of thousands may be in its hands. At this instant by far the greatest amount of earth’s intercourse with heaven is carried on, directly or indirectly, through the Sacraments. There is a vast wild world of sorrow upon earth. But over great regions of it the Sacraments are distilling dews of heavenly peace. In the underground scenery of hidden hearts they are at work, turning wells of bitterness into springs of freshness and of life. They are drying the widow’s tears, raising up unexpected benefactors for the orphan, nerving the pusillanimous, softening the desperate, rousing the torpid, crowning those who strive, and doing all things for those who die. As the animals came trooping to Adam to be named, so mortal sorrows are coming in herds at all hours to the Sacraments to receive the blessing of the second Adam. Somewhere or other at this moment a Communion may be giving a vocation

to some youthful apostle who in after-years shall carry the Gospel to populous tribes in the Asian uplands, or throughout the newly opened river-system of neglected Africa. Crowds in heaven shall owe their endless bliss to that one Communion.

“But the world of human joys is not much less vast than the world of human sorrows; and the Sacraments are there also, purifying, elevating, sanctifying, multiplying, supernaturalizing multitudes of these blameless delights. Yet there is a difference between their action upon sorrows and their action upon joys. They make no sorrows. They cause no mourning. They create no darkness. Whereas they are forever creating gladnesses. Splendors flash from them as they move, and their splendors are all jubilees. They are fountains of happiness to all the earth. They cover even the monotonous sands of life with verdure, and make the desert bloom, and crown the hard rocks with flowers, and beautify with their softness the sternest solitudes. Who can tell what songs of human goodness are being sung this hour in the ear of God, because of the joyous inspirations of the Sacraments? Of a truth human joy is a beautiful thing, a very worship of the Creator. Out of Himself there is no beauty like it, unless it be the jubilee of angels. But the joys which the Sacraments have sanctified, and, still more, the joys which the Sacraments have gendered, who can tell how sweet they are to the complacency of our heavenly Father?”


Below the Sacraments, far, far below, with none of the almost miraculous character given to them by the divine institution, come the Sacramentals, channels to us of numberless graces and blessings, less rich, less full than those which flow in on the soul with such torrent-like power, but yet so necessary in the great scheme of the kingdom, that we should feel as though numbed and paralyzed by their privation. These signs and channels of actual grace, instituted by ecclesiastical authority—the ceremonies of divine worship, all the blessed articles employed in the various functions of the Church, her prayers either in divine worship or in the conferring of the Sacraments, the blessings on ourselves and all that form the various realms of nature—are employed for our well-being and participate of the nature of Sacraments.

OF THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

OF the many definitions, each of them seemingly apt and appropriate, which may serve to explain the nature of a Sacrament, there is none, says the catechism of the Council of Trent, more simple and perspicuous than that of St. Augustine, a definition which has since been adopted by all scholastic doctors. "A Sacrament," says he, "is a sign of a sacred thing; or, as has been said in other words, but to the same purport, a Sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible grace, instituted for our justification." The Sacraments of the Old Law conferred only legal sanctity. Those of the New Law confer true internal sanctity. The Sacraments of the New Law were instituted by Christ for the sanctification and salvation of men. "Through them," says the Council of Trent, "all true justice either begins, or being begun, is increased, or being lost, is repaired." Sacraments, we said, are visible signs of invisible graces. Now, some one may ask, Are not images and crosses signs of sacred things? I answer, they are, but they are not therefore Sacraments; because it is the nature of a Sacrament not only to signify some sacred thing, but also to cause holiness or grace in the soul. Crosses or images indeed signify some holy thing, but they do not contain or give grace; but the Sacraments of the New Law do contain in themselves and give a sacred thing, viz.: grace. Thus St. Augustine writes: "The Sacraments of the Old Law promised the Saviour; the Sacraments of the New Law give health and life; for those did only signify, but these also effect what they signify. As the seal of a king not only represents and shows the image of the king, but also makes and imprints it in the wax; in like manner, the Sacraments in the New Testament not only signify grace, but also imprint and work grace in the soul of man."

The Catholic doctrine respecting the Sacraments in general is thus laid down by the Œcumenical Council of Trent in its seventh session, celebrated on the third day of March, 1547:

CANON I.—If any one saith that the Sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by Jesus Christ, our Lord; or that they are more or less than seven, to wit: Baptism, Confirmation,



JESUS, Jesus, come to me ;
Oh, how much I long for thee!
Come thou, of all friends the best,
Take possession of my breast.
Comfort my poor soul distressed,
Come and dwell within my breast
Oh, how oft I sigh for thee !
Jesus, Jesus, come to me.

FIRST COMMUNION.



MARRIAGE CEREMONY.



THE MADONNA OF THE SCAPULAR.



ST. ANN, THE MOTHER OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Order, and Matrimony; or even that any one of these seven is not truly and properly a Sacrament, let him be anathema.

CANON II.—If any one saith that these said Sacraments of the New Law do not differ from the Sacraments of the Old Law save that the ceremonies are different, and different the outward rites, let him be anathema.

CANON III.—If any one saith that these seven Sacraments are in such wise equal to each other, as that one is not in any way more worthy than another, let him be anathema.

CANON IV.—If any one saith that the Sacraments of the New Law are not necessary unto salvation, but superfluous; and that without them, or without the desire thereof, men obtain of God, through faith alone, the grace of justification; though all (the Sacraments) are not indeed necessary for every individual, let him be anathema.

CANON V.—If any one saith that these Sacraments were instituted for the sake of nourishing faith alone, let him be anathema.

CANON VI.—If any one saith that the Sacraments of the New Law do not contain the grace which they signify; or that they do not confer that grace on those who do not place an obstacle thereunto; as though they were merely outward signs of grace or justice received through faith, and certain marks of the Christian profession, whereby believers are distinguished amongst men from unbelieving, let him be anathema.

CANON VII.—If any one saith that grace, as far as God's part is concerned, is not given through the said Sacraments always, and to all men, even though they receive them rightly, but (only) sometimes, and to some persons, let him be anathema.

CANON VIII.—If any one saith that by the said Sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed, but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of grace, let him be anathema.

CANON IX.—If any man saith that in the three Sacraments (to wit), Baptism, Confirmation, and Order, there is not imprinted in the soul a character, that is, a certain spiritual and indelible

sign, on account of which they can not be repeated, let him be anathema.

CANON X.—If any one saith that all Christians have power to administer the word and all the Sacraments, let him be anathema.

CANON XI.—If any one saith that in ministers, when they effect and confer the Sacraments, there is not required the intention at least of doing what the Church does, let him be anathema.

CANON XII.—If any one saith that a minister being in mortal sin, if so be that he observe all the essentials which belong to the effecting or conferring of the Sacrament, neither effects nor confers the Sacrament, let him be anathema.

CANON XIII.—If any one saith that the received and approved rites of the Catholic Church, wont to be used in the solemn administration of the Sacraments, may be condemned, or without sin be omitted at pleasure by the ministers, or be changed by every pastor of the churches into other new ones, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA.

The Sacraments of the Catholic Church are seven, as is proved from Scripture, from the unbroken tradition of the Fathers, and from the authoritative definitions of Councils. Why they are neither more nor less may be shown, at least with some degree of probability, even from the analogy that exists between the natural and the spiritual life. In order to exist, to preserve existence, and to contribute to his own and the public good, seven things are necessary to man—to be born; to grow; to be nurtured; to be cured when sick; when weak to be strengthened; as far as regards the public weal, to have magistrates invested with authority to govern; and finally, to perpetuate himself and his species by legitimate offspring. Analogous, then, as all these things obviously are to that life by which the soul lives to God, we discover in them a reason to account for the number of the Sacraments. Amongst them the first is Baptism—the gate, as it were, to all the other Sacraments, by which we are born again to Christ. The next is Confirmation, by which we grow up, and are strengthened in the grace of God, for, as St. Augustine observes: “To the Apostles who had already received baptism, the Redeemer said: ‘Stay you in the city till you be endued with

power from on high.''' The third is the Eucharist, that true bread from heaven which nourishes our souls to eternal life. The fourth is Penance, by which the soul which has caught the contagion of sin is restored to spiritual health. The fifth is Extreme Unction, which obliterates the traces of sin and invigorates the powers of the soul, of which St. James says: "If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." The sixth is Holy Orders, which gives power to perpetuate in the Church the public administration of the Sacraments, and the exercise of all the sacred functions of the ministry. The seventh and last is Matrimony, a sacrament instituted for the legitimate and holy union of man and woman for the conservation of the human race, and the education of children in the knowledge of religion and the love and fear of God.

The Sacraments are typified in sacred art by the Book with seven seals which was seen in heaven by that beloved apostle who drew from the heart of Jesus such deep draughts of inspiration. They are the great channels of sanctifying grace obtained for man by the Lamb of God, who alone could open those sealed fountains. Hence the Sacraments were all instituted by our Lord Himself, since none but God could indissolubly connect material acts with divine grace, or make it accompany them. The Church has always recognized the Seven Sacraments as instituted by Jesus Christ, although the holy apostles and disciples who, under God's inspiration, wrote for the edification of the faithful, do not in all cases record the time or occasion—a fact that can be easily understood when we see how St. John, with his heart full of love for his divine Master, telling so minutely the language and events of the Last Supper, notices the institution of the Blessed Eucharist only by an allusion to the inscrutable and unfathomable love of Jesus. So, too, ceremonies apparently commanded by our Lord in positive terms, such as the washing of feet, have never at any time been regarded by the Church as Sacraments. The rites of the Old Law which approach the sacramental character, such as circumcision and the like, were but types and shadows; they were of the law and worked through the law; they did not convey the grace purchased by the blood of the Messias.

The Sacraments are the channels instituted by Jesus Christ, by which the saving graces are to be imparted to the soul. To the hierarchy and priesthood of the New Law the graces of state and an indelible character, with the right of duly administering the Sacraments, are imparted by the Sacrament of Holy Orders; by Baptism man is delivered from the bondage of Satan and original sin, cleansed white in the Blood of the Lamb; he receives the indelible character of a Christian, and is enrolled as a citizen of the kingdom. He is confirmed indelibly in this character, and made a soldier of Christ by Confirmation, receiving a fullness of grace from the Holy Ghost; if he falters in his allegiance, if he offends and transgresses, the Precious Blood, on his contrite return, will wash away his defilement in the Sacrament of Penance; while, in the Holy Eucharist, Jesus Christ gives Himself as a food to the faithful soul—a food necessary to attain eternal life. He sanctified marriage, and through it the family, by blessing with His first miracle the wedding at Cana; but He made matrimony a Sacrament by elevating it to be an image of His union with the Church; and through it He pours grace to make its recipients holy as instruments in adding fresh citizens to His kingdom. Then, as the mortal career closes, Extreme Unction, that last unction of the Holy Spirit, soothes the sufferer in that last struggle which all must meet, but which no familiarity can rob of its terrors. Christ, in the deep love which overflowed from His sacred Heart, by an invention of affection, gave this Sacrament with its grace for that fearful hour when human aid and human help avail not, and man feels unutterably alone. Thus the Sacraments differ as stars differ in glory. The Blessed Sacrament—the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ—is the sun, where grace is tasted in its very fountain; Order preserves the teaching Church as Matrimony the Church of the disciples. They are necessary to the kingdom, though not necessary to each and all, but necessary to those who are called; while those who follow the Lamb in virgin purity on earth are invited to swell the snow-white band that attend His triumph in heaven. But Baptism is necessary to all, and Penance to all who have lost their baptismal innocence; while the Holy Eucharist, as the special food sustaining spiritual

life, is, to those who have reached the age of reason and can approach it, so necessary that to forego it entails exclusion from the Christian fold. Confirmation and Extreme Unction, though not absolutely necessary, yet can not be relinquished by the Christian who can approach them, without risk and peril to his immortal soul that none should incur. Each of these Sacraments has its peculiar graces; and we need all the aids of grace to obtain our salvation. They are not merely pious ceremonies, intended to keep alive faith and devotion; they are divine institutions, and attended with incalculable graces, which God bestows through them, and which can fail to benefit us only by neglect or unworthiness on our own part.

GRACE, AND ESPECIALLY THE GRACE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

Grace, in its widest sense, means a favor, a mercy, a liberal kindness bestowed upon us, and to which we have no claim. Were it something ours by right, to which we were entitled absolutely, it would be no grace. Graces in the order of nature are all gifts, such as health, strength of body, mental abilities, genius, and talents, which are bestowed on good and bad, believers and unbelievers. These are all considered as graces, because God owes them to no one, and yet gives them to His human creatures as it is pleasing to Him, and in what measure He pleases.

Above these purely natural graces are the supernatural. These are favors and blessings which God grants to His reasonable creatures—favors and graces which are not connected with our bodily life, but are given to aid us in the great end for which we were created, the attaining, by a life spent in obedience to God's holy will, our salvation and eternal life.

The Incarnation of the Eternal Word, His preaching, His miracles, His teaching, the establishment of His Church, the Sacraments, His death, were external graces of the supernatural order, while the interior helps which God gives us, such as good inspirations, the gifts of faith, hope, and charity, are internal graces.

Sanctifying or habitual grace is that grace of God which dwells in and remains with us; which sanctifies us, and renders us just

and agreeable in His eyes. It makes us His friends, from having been His enemies by sin.

In so far as salvation is concerned we can do no good without God's grace; for salvation is a supernatural end, and we, of ourselves, have only natural means, which are not adequate to attain it. We need a supernatural means, and this is grace. Yet we are free agents, and can resist or reject the grace offered us. We see this daily; men turn a deaf ear to all the graces, rejecting the means of salvation and, as it were, courting their own destruction. We can not merit the first grace, or it would be a debt, not a grace; but God never refuses His grace to those who ask it as they ought to do; and, if we are lost, our destruction is from ourselves and the fault our own.

To obtain God's grace and to abide in God's grace is, then, the aim of a Christian; to obtain that grace of final perseverance which will enable him to persevere to the end, and die the death of a saint. Prayer attracts or obtains grace; the Sacraments confer it.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM—ORIGINAL SIN—THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

God formed man from the slime of the earth, immortal and impassible. His soul He created to His own image and likeness; gifted him with free will, and tempered all his motions and appetites, so as to subject them, at all times, to the dictate of reason. He then added the invaluable gift of original righteousness. When Adam had departed from the obedience due to God, and had violated the prohibition "of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat, for in what day soever thou shalt eat it, thou shalt die the death;" he fell into the extreme misery of losing the sanctity and righteousness in which he was created; and of becoming subject to all those other evils which are detailed by the Council of Trent. The first man Adam, when he transgressed

the commandment of God in Paradise, immediately lost the holiness and justice wherein he had been constituted, and incurred, through the offense of that prevarication, the wrath and indignation of God, and, consequently, death, with which God had previously threatened him, and, together with death, captivity and his power who thenceforth had the empire of death—that is to say, the devil; and through that offense of prevarication, Adam was wholly changed for the worse in body and soul.

“This prevarication was not limited in its evil consequences only to Adam himself; it injured his posterity also. The holiness and justice which he had received of God, he lost not for himself alone, but for us also; and, defiled by the sin of disobedience, he has transferred into the whole human race, not only death and bodily pains, but sin also, which is the death of the soul.” As the apostle says: “By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.” (Rom. v. 12).

Such is the teaching of the Catholic Church in the language of the Council of Trent. (1)

This doctrine of the fall of man underlies not only the whole of the Old Testament, but is preserved in the traditions of all nations. Everywhere man retained the tradition of a purer and happier state in which he once was, and which he forfeited by his transgression.

This original sin is the source of all human misery. It not only barred heaven against mankind; but, by leaving him subject to concupiscence, or an incentive to sin—a captive under the power of Satan—exposed him to fall under temptations to actual sin, and the punishment due them. Human nature was utterly powerless to undo the evil done by Adam. There was no remedy but the merit of the one Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath reconciled us to God in His own blood, made unto us justice, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30). And that remedy was applied first to exempt from original sin the Virgin whom, from all eternity, the Eternal Father had decreed to become the Mother of His divine Son. (2) This doctrine has been

(1) Sess. V., June 17, 1546.

(2) *Ib.*

that of the Church from the earliest times—was so well-known and generally diffused, that Mahomet took it, with other Christian truths, in forming his new religion; so irrefragable, that Luther even after abandoning the one sheep-fold of the one Shepherd strenuously maintained it. It was implied in decisions of many Sovereign Pontiffs, and in the decree of the Council of Trent on Original Sin. It was woven into the very heart of the Catholic world by devotions and festivals.

The piety of the faithful asked that this should be specifically defined, and His Holiness, Pope Pius IX., on the 2d of February, 1849, in an encyclical letter, asked, from the bishops of the Catholic world, their testimony as to the pious belief and devotion of their several flocks toward the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, and the opinion of the bishops themselves as to the promulgation of a precise definition. The responses were in unison. All tongues became one. Then the Pope, on the 8th of December, 1854, in the presence of a vast array of bishops, issued Letters Apostolic, in which he said: "We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore should firmly and constantly be believed by all the faithful." (1)

Clear and precise as this definition is, the enemies of the Church at once loudly assailed it, or, more generally, other doctrines which they supposed the Immaculate Conception to be. Some, denying the doctrine of original sin, and therefore believing in the immaculate conception of all mankind, denied that of Mary. Others claimed that it made her a goddess—as though Eve, when free from original sin, were consequently a goddess.

The Catholic doctrine is clear. By the sin of Adam he drew not only on himself, but on his posterity, with the single exception of Mary, whom God exempted, as the destined mother of His Son, from the guilt of original sin. Mary is said to be immaculate in her conception—that is, that in the very first instant

(1) *Ineffabilis Deus.*

of her existence, when her soul was created and infused into the body, she was exempted from original sin, not subsequently sanctified in the womb, like the Prophet Jeremias and St. John the Baptist, after having been for a time subject to the guilt of Adam's transgression.

The immaculate purity of this ever-Blessed Virgin is a privilege of immense value, bestowed only on Mary. "Behold, they that serve Him are not steadfast, and in His angels He found wickedness; but in Mary He found none. She, ever steadfast in His holy service, was, by the special disposition of Divine Providence, from the very first instant of her conception, evermore preserved in innocence, and perfectly unsullied by the smallest stain of sin. She never ceased to be the undefiled temple of God, the chaste and immaculate spouse of the Holy Ghost."

Her deliverance was through the merit of the Precious Blood of her Divine Son. For the rest of mankind, since the establishment of the Church, this merit of Jesus Christ is applied, both to adults and to infants, by the Sacrament of Baptism rightly administered.

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

"Baptism is a term of Greek origin, and means immersion, washing, purification. The first Sacrament is so called because it purifies our souls from the guilt of sin, as water washes and purifies the body.

"That it is a Sacrament instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ is too plainly laid down in the Gospels to be controverted, and among all who separated from the Church, there were none so bold as to deny it, till these later days, when men begin to lose all faith, and many deny its supernatural effects. Yet the commission to baptize is precise. 'Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' (St. Matthew xxviii. 19). Its effect is no less clearly expressed by the lips of truth itself. 'Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can not enter into the kingdom of God' (St. John iii. 5). 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned' (St. Mark xvi. 16).

“Baptism is a sacrament which effaces all sin, and remits the punishment due to it. It makes us children of God and of His Church. Not only is original sin remitted by it, but all actual sins committed before its worthy reception. Baptism remits not only the sin itself, but also for time and eternity remits all punishment due to the justice of God, for sins committed before it is received; so that the baptized Christian is, at the moment of Baptism, if he worthily receive it, not accountable to the justice of God for anything. The mercy of God applies to us in this Sacrament, without any reserve, the merits of Jesus, in granting us the remission of all sin and all punishment. ‘No act in life can surpass it in importance. It effects a most complete spiritual revolution, even in the unconscious child. It effects it in a most wonderful way.’ ‘Each Baptism is a greater, a diviner, a more magnificent work than the creation of the material world.’ ‘The grace of Baptism restores us to a supernatural standing; it makes us God’s adopted children. It does not merely rescue us from hell, and leave us to spend an eternity of mere natural blessedness by the streams and among the fruit-trees of some terrestrial paradise. It entitles us to possess and enjoy God forever. Moreover, this Sacrament stores our souls with most mysterious graces. It infuses celestial habits into us, and endows us with those unfathomable wonders, the gifts of the Holy Ghost. No miracle can be more complete or more instantaneous, or more gratuitous than the grace of Baptism.’ (1) And all these gifts and graces are bestowed to enable us to struggle against the inevitable consequences of Adam’s sin which remain—ignorance, concupiscence, corporal and spiritual infirmities—from which we shall, if faithful to the end, be delivered after the general resurrection, a deliverance that may be considered an effect of Baptism.

“Washed in the waters of Baptism, we begin a new life of grace in Jesus Christ, which unites us to God in faith, hope, and charity; which enables us to call God our Father, and regard His kingdom as our inheritance. (2) We live by the life of Jesus, or rather He lives in us, and we are His members; and thus united to Him, we are adopted by God as His children, and

 (1) Faber.

(2) Council of Trent. Sess. V., ch. vii.

co-heirs with Jesus Christ to His heavenly kingdom'' (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 30; 1 John iii. 1; Rom. viii. 17).

Baptism numbers us among the faithful, and gives us a right to the other Sacraments, all which it must invariably precede. As it imprints an indelible character on the soul, it can not be repeated.

The ordinary ministers of the Sacrament of Baptism are the bishops and priests. Deacons are the only extraordinary ministers who can baptize solemnly, using all the ceremonies; but in case of necessity—of imminent death—any one, without distinction of sex and religion, can give private baptism, provided only that he has the intention to do what the Church does. This has always been the practice of the Catholic Church, as the tradition of every age attests.

In these cases, if several are at hand, the baptism should be given by an ecclesiastic, if present, rather than by a lay person; by a Catholic, rather than one not of the faith; by a man, rather than a woman; but, except in case of extreme necessity, a parent should not baptize his own child.

Private baptism is conferred by taking water—either holy water or any natural water, from spring, well, lake, or river; rain-water, or even dew—and pouring it on the person to be baptized, if possible on the head, taking care that the water touches the skin, though it is enough, for the validity of the Sacrament, that the water touch any considerable part of the body. While pouring the water, the one who confers baptism must say: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost."

Where there is no such danger of death as to call for private baptism, the child should be taken as early as possible to the parish church to receive this Sacrament; and, if it survives after private baptism, should be taken to have the ceremonies supplied. In such case, it should always be stated that private baptism has been conferred.

The Baptism of infants is not positively directed in the Gospels, but it is directly inferred, and this inference is clearly justified by the testimony of universal tradition, and the unvarying prac-

tice of the Church since the Apostles. The Council of Trent formally condemns those who assert that little children, for that they have not actual faith, are not to be reckoned amongst the faithful after having received Baptism, or that Baptism should be deferred till they have attained years of discretion. (1)

No Catholic parent who loves his child really, will defer its Baptism. What will he not do to shield it from disease? But here, worse than disease, the eternal loss of the beatific vision, in case of early death, threatens it; if life is spared, the child is under the bondage of Satan, concupiscence gains strength, the graces of God are withheld, it is daily weakened for the struggle of life, and for its attainment of everlasting happiness.

CEREMONY OF BAPTISM.

The person to be baptized, with a god-father and god-mother, goes to the church and is met by the priest in surplice and violet stole, who stops him, where the full ceremony is observed, at the door, to show that one subject to original sin is unworthy to be admitted, as it makes him a slave of the devil and subject to his empire.

Then he asks: "What dost thou ask of the Church of God?" The sponsor or adult answers: "Faith." "What doth faith obtain for thee?" "Life everlasting." Then the priest continues: "If, then, thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." Then he breathes thrice on the face of the one to be baptized, "to signify," says St. Augustine, "the repulsion of the devil by the Holy Spirit, who is called the breath of God, and by the merits of Christ." He then says: "Depart from him, unclean spirit, and give place unto the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete." Then he makes the sign of the cross on the forehead and breast of the person to be baptized, to teach us that we should glory in the Cross of Christ, and love it, nor ever be ashamed to acknowledge ourselves Christians, or fulfill our duties as such. "Receive

(1) Sess. VII. On Baptism, Canon xiii.

the sign of the cross, both upon thy forehead and also upon thy heart; take unto thee the faith of the heavenly precepts, and in thy manners beseech that thou mayest be now the temple of God." Then he prays God to keep the elect one by His perpetual assistance, that he may merit, by keeping the commandments, to attain unto the glory of regeneration. Then he lays his hand on the head, and prays, beseeching God to drive out all blindness of heart, to break the bonds of Satan, to open to him the gates of mercy, that he may be free from wicked desires, and joyfully serve Him in His Church.

Then the priest blesses the salt, by a prayer in the form of an exorcism, and puts a little into the mouth of the child, to signify the wisdom and taste for heavenly things which the Church demands for her children—for salt is symbolical of wisdom.

Then, wishing peace, he prays God to suffer the child no longer to hunger for want of being filled with heavenly meat, so that he may be always fervent in spirit, rejoicing in hope, always serving the name of God. Then he continues: "Bring him, O Lord, we beseech Thee, to the laver of regeneration, that with Thy faithful he may deserve to attain unto the everlasting rewards of Thy promises."

Then he again exorcises the evil spirit in the name of the Holy Trinity, and bids him depart at the command of Jesus Christ, who walked upon the water. Next he makes the sign of the cross, with his thumb, on the forehead of the person to be baptized, saying: "And this sign ✠ of the holy cross, which we make upon his forehead, do thou, accursed devil, never dare to violate." Then laying his hand on the head of the person to be baptized, the priest prays the Almighty to enlighten His servant with the light of wisdom; to cleanse, sanctify him, and give him true knowledge, that, being made worthy of the grace of Baptism, he may retain firm hope, right counsel, and holy doctrine. After this, the priest lays the end of his stole upon the child or adult, and admits him into the church, saying: "Enter into the temple of God, that thou mayest have part with Christ unto life everlasting." When they have entered the church, the priest, as he proceeds to the font, says the Creed and the Lord's prayer with the

sponsors, to show that the Church baptizes only those who live in the faith of Christ and His Church, and to show that she desires none of her children to be ignorant of the prayer which Our Lord taught. The entering into the church, while reading the Creed, shows that it is only by the profession and belief of the true faith that we can merit heaven. Before he reaches the font he pronounces another exorcism. Then the priest, wetting his finger with saliva, and touching in succession both ears of the person, in the form of the cross, says: "Ephphetha ✠, that is to say ✠, Be thou opened;" then, touching the nostrils, "for a savor of sweetness. But thou, Satan ✠, fly! behold the great and mighty God approaches, the God who wresteth the prey from the strong." This ceremony is based on the action of Our Lord, when curing the deaf and dumb man, and shows that the Church desires her children to have their ears ever open to hear the Word of God, and never be deaf to it, under the influence of the evil one.

The priest then interrogates the one to be baptized, by name. "N., does thou renounce Satan?" And he answers, if an adult, or the sponsor answers for him, if a child: "I do renounce him." "And all his works?" Again the answer is: "I do renounce them." "And all his pomps?" Again the reply comes: "I do renounce them." These promises are required because, in Baptism, the obligations are reciprocal. Man engages to renounce the devil, his works and pomps, and God engages to give eternal life to all those who faithfully keep these promises.

By them the Christian renounces the devil and his partisans; the maxims, pride, and vanity of the world; and sin in all its forms. He believes in Jesus Christ, enrolls himself in His service, submits to the mysteries He has revealed, desires to follow His doctrine and example, to belong to the body of His disciples and soldiers, and to take Him and no other for his Master. It is a pious custom often, in after life, to renew these promises, in order to reanimate our faith and courage.

After this, the priest dips his thumb in the oil of the Catechumens, and anoints the person on the breast and between the shoulders, in the form of the cross saying: "I anoint thee ✠ with

the oil of salvation, in Christ Jesus ✠ our Lord, that thou mayest have life everlasting." This, as explained by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, is emblematic of the grace which enables Christians to meet the toils and combats of a spiritual life, and which sweetens the yoke of Jesus Christ which the Catechumen assumes.

The priest then reverses his stole from violet to white, and proceeds: "N., dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?" The person or his sponsor answers: "I do believe." "Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was born, and suffered?" "I do believe." "Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?" "I do believe." "N., wilt thou be baptized?" The person or sponsor replies, "I will."

Sponsors should always know this ceremony, and make the responses plainly and distinctly.

Then the god-father or god-mother, or both, hold or touch the person to be baptized, and the priest takes the baptismal water in a small vessel, and pours it thrice on the head of the person to be baptized, in the form of a cross, and at the same time says: "N., I baptize thee, in the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost."

Then he anoints him on the top of the head with holy chrism, saying: "May God Almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath regenerated thee by water and the Holy Ghost, and who hath given unto thee remission of all thy sins, Himself anoint thee with the chrism of salvation ✠, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, unto life everlasting."

He next lays a white linen cloth on the head of the child, instead of the white linen garment anciently worn for a week by the newly baptized, and says: "N., receive this white garment and see thou carry it without stain before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life." Then he gives the baptized or the sponsor a lighted candle, saying: "N., receive this burning light, and keep thy baptism blameless: observe the commandments of God, that, when the Lord shall come

to the nuptials, thou mayest meet Him, together with all the saints in the heavenly court, and have eternal life, and live forever and ever. Amen." Then he dismisses the new Christian: "N., go in peace, and the Lord be with thee."

The unction of the head signifies that we are, in a certain sense, what St. Peter calls us: "a kingly priesthood, a holy nation" (1 St. Peter ii. 9). Kings and priests are anointed, and we are, by our union with Jesus Christ, made, in a certain sense, partakers of His priesthood and royalty. We are kings, also, by the empire of grace, by which we reign over our passions, and by our right to heaven, where we shall reign with Christ forever. We are, too, by this unction, consecrated to God as His temples.

The burning taper given to the newly baptized is to teach him that he should walk by the light of faith, and that, by the lustre of his virtues, and the ardor of his charity, he should be a burning and shining light to mankind.

The ceremonies of Baptism are very ancient. Tertullian, St. Basil, St. Cyril, St. Augustine explained them centuries ago; and the Church retains them as they came down from primitive times. They tell, in unmistakable terms, her belief in the doctrine of original sin, and in the terrible power which that sin gave the devil over the human race. It looks to Jesus Christ alone to deliver us from that bondage, and to support us in our weakness during the struggle which is to last during life with the three great enemies of salvation then renounced, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, enemies that will not relinquish their claim, nor cease seeking to regain by every means the empire they lose in Baptism.

What parent meditating on all this can not but feel more deeply the responsibility of bringing up that child, or promise in heart to do all that is possible to ward off from it all temptation, and try by prayer, instruction, counsel, and good example, to fit that child for the struggle with the enemies of its salvation?

What parent, conscious of all these perils, can deliberately deprive a child of a sound Catholic education, or expose it to influences where its faith will be weakened, false impressions received, shame perhaps of the true faith gradually instilled, so that the

child, when the danger is greatest, is without the helps supplied by the Sacraments and the Holy Sacrifice, and perishes?

At baptism, besides those who administer the Sacrament, god-fathers and god-mothers are also required. They present to the church the person to be baptized, and are witnesses of his baptism; they also answer in his name, when the person to be baptized is a child. They are strictly bound to exercise a constant vigilance over their spiritual children, and carefully to instruct them in the maxims of a Christian life. Only Catholics should be admitted as sponsors.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

CONFIRMATION, though having a most intimate connection with baptism, is yet an entirely different sacrament. For, in baptism, the Christian is enlisted into the service, in confirmation he is equipped for battle; at the baptismal font the Holy Ghost imparts the plenitude of innocence, in confirmation the perfection of grace; in baptism we are regenerated to life, after baptism we are fortified for the combat; in baptism we are cleansed, in confirmation we are strengthened; regeneration saves by its own efficacy those who receive baptism in peace, confirmation arms and prepares for the conflict.

At the time when the fire of the passions is about to be enkindled in the heart, and the mind is sufficiently capable of knowing God, He becomes the ruling spirit of the youth, pervading all the faculties of the soul in its now restless and expanded state. But dangers multiply as youth advances; a stranger cast without experience upon the perilous ways of the world, he has need of additional helps. At this crisis religion does not forget her child; she has her reinforcements in reserve. Confirmation will support his trembling steps, like the staff in the hands of the traveler, or like those sceptres which passed from race to race among the royal families of antiquity. All the morality of life is implied in the Sacrament of Confirmation, because, "whoever

has the courage to confess God will necessarily practice virtue, as the commission of crime is nothing but the denial of the Creator." (1)

There was never such need of supernatural strength as there is in our days. Look at the young people entering the world, and what Christian parent will not shrink with dread from the dangers to which her children are to be exposed. Religion is derided and made light of; the religion of the Son of God, illustrated by the lives of all who are holy, great, noble, learned, and sublime in history, is treated as an idle tale; every effort is made to weaken the faith of the Catholic youth—to make it, in fact, ashamed of its Church, when that Church, even to those who deny its claims, is so grand and incomprehensible as to inspire them with awe.

Where, then, is the Catholic parent to seek supernatural strength for that child to meet its terrible antagonists? The Church answers: In the Sacrament of Confirmation. Confirmation is a Sacrament of the New Law, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ; it communicates the Holy Ghost to those already baptized, to strengthen them in their faith and make them perfect Christians. The outward sign of this Sacrament is the imposition of the bishop's hands, the anointing with chrism, and the form of prayer used by him. The inward grace is the giving of the Holy Ghost. In the primitive times this was manifested by miraculous gifts, but, as St. Augustine says: "Temporal and sensible miracles do not now attest that the Holy Ghost is given by the imposition of hands, as he was formerly given to confirm incipient faith, and extend the rising Church. For who now expects that those on whom hands are imposed, that they may receive the Holy Ghost, should suddenly begin to speak with tongues? But divine charity is understood to be invisibly and secretly inspired into their hearts by the bond of peace; so that they can say: 'The charity of God is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given us.'" (2)

Confirmation has all the character of a Sacrament, and as such it is recognized by the uniform, universal, and constant tradition

(1) Chateaubriand.

(2) Lib. 3, De Baptism., contra Donat. ch. 16.

of the Church.(1) It was denied in the sixteenth century because the Gospels do not record the particular occasion wherein Christ commissioned His apostles to communicate the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands. But the Gospels nowhere assume to detail the conversation of our Lord with His apostles during the period after His resurrection, when He instructed them in regard to the kingdom of God. Certain it is that they, confirmed by receiving the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, could not of themselves have instituted a rite to convey the Holy Ghost, and had they done so, no miraculous powers would have attended such an unauthorized act. The miracles that accompanied confirmation proved their authority from their Divine Master to administer the Sacrament. It was a Sacrament reserved to the apostles and the bishops instituted by them. This is clear from the first confirmation recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. When the martyrdom of St. Stephen scattered the Church at Jerusalem, St. Philip the deacon rivalled his martyred colleague by the zeal wherewith he announced Jesus Christ crucified to the inhabitants of Samaria. Heaven gave its solemn sanction to the preaching of its herald. The palsied and the lame by his interposition recovered the use of their limbs; at his command demons fled from the bodies which they harassed; other prodigies manifested his divine commission, and Samaria embraced the Gospel. The holy deacon administered the Sacrament of Baptism to the converted multitudes. But something more was needed. Deacon he was, and could baptize; but Confirmation was needed, and this required one of the apostles. Messengers were sent to Jerusalem, and St. Peter and St. John set out to confirm the Samaritans. This at once implies a customary act, and shows that it had been the custom that the apostles confirmed those who had been baptized, and must have done so in many cases at Jerusalem. "When they (the apostles) were come, they prayed for them (the newly-baptized Samaritans), that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For He was not yet come upon any one of them; but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid

(1) Tertullian De Bapt., ch. 7. Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book VI., ch. 43. St. Cyprian, Ep. 7. Optatus, St. Pacian, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Cyril of Alexandria.

their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts viii. 17). We have also recorded a Confirmation by St. Paul at Ephesus. Some disciples of St. John the Baptist heard the preaching of St. Paul and embraced the faith. "They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; and when Paul had imposed hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts xix. 5, 6). St. Paul indeed, in his Epistle to the Hebrews (vi. 2), classes as more perfect things, mysteries of which to discourse, the doctrine of Baptism and the Imposition of Hands.

To receive this Sacrament one must be baptized. It was at one time customary to confirm immediately after baptism; now, in the Western Church, the Sacrament is deferred till the person has attained the age of reason, that it may be received with greater fruit after proper instruction, and that the young Christian may have some idea of his dangers, and of the necessity of this great supernatural help, feeling already the temptations which are to beset his path in life. The Sacrament is to be received in a state of grace, and the person to be confirmed should know the principal mysteries of faith.

Absolutely speaking, one may be saved without Confirmation; but in view of the temptations and dangers, there would be every probability against it. It is certainly a sin to neglect to receive it, or, what is worse, to despise it, because this is a disobedience to God's will, who instituted the Sacrament; and to deprive ourselves voluntarily of so powerful an aid to salvation can not but displease the Almighty. The greater the temptations or persecutions of the times to all Catholics, or to any one in particular, the greater becomes the necessity for receiving it.

When the bishop comes to give confirmation in a church, all not confirmed, who are of sufficient age, should prepare by a good confession, and by attending the instructions always given, or by instruction at home from suitable books. On the day appointed they should come fasting, according to the general usage of the Church, although this is not of such imperative necessity as in the case of Communion.

The bishop, turning toward those who are to be confirmed

with his hands joined before his breast, says: "May the Holy Ghost come down upon you, and the power of the Most High keep you from all sin. Amen." Then, making the sign of the cross, he says: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. O Lord! hear my prayer: and let my cry come unto Thee. The Lord be with you;" to which is responded: "And with thy spirit."

Then extending his hands toward those who are to be confirmed, which the ancients called the Imposition of Hands, he addresses this solemn prayer to the eternal Father, begging of Him, through Jesus Christ His Son, that He would send down His Holy Spirit, with all His gifts, into their souls.

"O Almighty, everlasting God, who has vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and who hast given them the remission of their sins; send forth upon them the seven-fold Holy Spirit, the Paraclete from heaven. Amen. The spirit of wisdom and of understanding. Amen. The spirit of counsel and of fortitude. Amen. The spirit of knowledge and of piety. Amen. Replenish them with the spirit of Thy fear, and sign them with the sign of the ✠ cross of Christ, in Thy mercy, unto life everlasting, through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen."

Then the bishop takes the name of each person that is to be confirmed, which may either be the same he had in baptism, or the name of any saint whom he chooses for his patron. He makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each with the holy chrism, or consecrated oil, saying: "N., I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of ✠ the Father, and of ✠ the Son, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost. Amen."

Then he gives the person confirmed a little blow on the cheek, saying, *Pax tecum*, Peace be with thee; to signify that henceforth he is to be ready, like a true soldier of Jesus Christ, to suffer patiently all kinds of affronts and injuries for his faith and for the cause of his Lord; and to comfort himself, that the true peace of God which "surpasseth all understanding" (Phil. iv. 7), will

ever be with him in all his conflicts and sufferings for so good a cause.

The chrism with which the Sacrament of Confirmation is administered in the Catholic Church, is a compound of oil of olives and balm or balsam, solemnly consecrated by the bishop on Maundy-Thursday, kept with great veneration in the Church, and made use of only in the consecration of such things as are in a particular manner set aside for the service of God, and dedicated and sanctified to him. Thus we consecrate with this holy unction bishops, churches, altars, and chalices; and whatsoever is once anointed with this sacred chrism, is in such a manner looked upon as set apart for God, that it must not, on any account, be perverted or turned to profane uses; it would be no less a crime than a sacrilege to violate or profane any such thing that has been thus sanctified. Hence Christians are to understand that by this unction of the holy chrism, which they receive in their Confirmation, they are also solemnly dedicated and consecrated to God, to be His temples forever; that this outward unction is the visible sign of an inward unction and sanctification of their souls by the Holy Ghost; that the mysterious compound of oil and balm, denotes the properties, graces, and effects of this Holy Spirit in their souls. For the oil represents the fullness of the grace received; both because, as oil, when dropped upon anything, spreads itself upon it, and insinuates itself into all its parts, so the grace of this Holy Sacrament penetrates into the soul and diffuses itself throughout all her powers; and also because oil, being a smooth, mild substance, it represents that spirit of mildness and patience under the cross, which is one principal effect of Confirmation. At the same time, as the balm has a particular property of preserving bodies after death from putrefaction, it fitly represents the fortifying grace received in Confirmation, by which our souls are preserved from the corruption of sin, after our sins have been destroyed by baptism.

After all have been confirmed, the bishop washes his hands, and, in the meantime, the following anthem is said or sung:

“Confirm, O God, that which Thou hast wrought in us from Thy holy temple, which is in Jerusalem. Glory be to the Father and

to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

Then the bishop, repeating this anthem, turns to the altar and says: "Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy:" to which is responded, "And grant us Thy salvation." "O Lord, hear my prayer:" "And let my cry come unto Thee." "The Lord be with you:" to which in the name of the people they respond, "And with thy spirit." Then he proceeds: "Let us pray. O God, who gavest the Holy Ghost to Thy apostles, and hast been pleased to ordain that, by them and by their successors, He should be given to the rest of the faithful; mercifully look down upon what we, Thy poor servants, have done, and grant that the hearts of these Thy faithful, whose foreheads we have anointed with Thy sacred chrism, and signed with the sign of the holy cross, may, by the same Holy Ghost coming down into them, and by His vouchsafing to dwell in them, be made the temple of His glory. Who, with the Father and the same Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen."

Then the bishop gives his benediction to all present in these words: "Behold, thus shall every man be blessed, who feareth the Lord. May the Lord bless you out of Sion, that you may see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of your life; and that you may live with Him for all eternity. Amen."

Confirmation produces striking effects in the soul. The grace of the Holy Spirit strengthens us against all exterior as well as interior temptations. Moreover, the character, which, like that of Baptism, is impressed on the soul, is one which can not be effaced.

The exterior temptations against which we here receive divine strength, are persecutions, outrages, wrongs, affronts, and, generally, all that wicked men can force Christians to endure, in order to shake their faith, or seduce them from virtue. The interior temptations are all those motions of concupiscence which the devil foment in us by his suggestions, and the world by its malice and evil example. The Holy Ghost enables us to resist these temptations by augmenting and perfecting charity in us; and by His gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge,

piety, and the fear of the Lord (Isaias xi. 2): Wisdom being a gift of the Holy Ghost that detaches us from this world, and gives us a taste and love only for the things of God. Understanding is a gift which enables us to comprehend justly the truths and mysteries of religion. Counsel enables us to choose what contributes mostly to the glory of God and our own salvation. Fortitude makes us surmount courageously all the obstacles and difficulties we meet in our way to heaven. Knowledge enables us to see the path in which we must walk, and all the snares and dangers to be avoided in the road to everlasting life. Piety is a gift which inclines us to serve God with facility and delight. The fear of the Lord fills us with respect mingled with love for our Creator, and makes us dread to offend Him.

Baptism made us children of God; in Confirmation we become soldiers of Jesus Christ.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

JESUS, veiled in His own great mystery of love, offered by our priests, dwelling on our altars, feeding our souls—this is the sacred and venerable truth which we are now about to consider. Our Lord, who having loved His own, loved them to the end, to give them some admirable and divine pledge of this His love, aware that the hour was come when He should pass out of this world to the Father, by an effort of wisdom which transcends the order of nature, devised a means of being always present with His own. Having celebrated the feast of the Paschal Lamb with His disciples, that the figure might give way to the reality, the shadow to the substance, “Jesus took bread, and giving thanks to God, blessed and brake and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat; this is my body; this do for the commemoration of me. And taking the chalice, he said: This chalice is the New Testament in my blood.”

As Catholic devotion, taking the dearest attribute to the Mother

of our Lord, couples with it the title she declared would be given her by all generations, and knows her best as "The Blessed Virgin," so Catholic devotion singles one of the Sacraments, and loves to call it "The Blessed Sacrament."

All the Sacraments are blessed and blessing, but this is pre-eminently blessed. Others give grace, here is the source of grace; others consist of a sign or ceremony, this contains Him who gives all rites and ceremonies, all Sacraments, their power, and efficacy: Jesus Christ, in His Body and Blood.

The doctrine of the Catholic Church, as to the Real Presence, is that of the Greek, Armenian, Syriac, Chaldee, Coptic, Abyssinian, Malabar, and other Oriental Churches, none of which ever departed from this uniform standard of faith. The Reformers, as they called themselves, in the sixteenth century, first dared to reject this universally received dogma, based, as it is, on the plain words of Scripture.

The holy Council of Trent, in its Thirteenth Session, under the Sovereign Pontiff Julius III. (October 11, 1551), thus defines the Catholic doctrine:

"The sacred and holy, oecumenical and general Synod of Trent—lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the same Legate and Nuncios of the Apostolic See presiding therein—although the end for which it assembled, not without the special guidance and governance of the Holy Ghost, was, that it might set forth the true and ancient doctrine touching faith and the Sacraments, and might apply a remedy to all heresies, and the other most grievous troubles with which the Church of God is now miserably agitated, and rent into many and various parts; yet even from the outset, this especially has been the object of its desires, that it might pluck up by the roots those laws of execrable errors and schisms wherewith the enemy hath, in these our calamitous days, oversown the doctrine of the faith, in the use and worship of the sacred and holy Eucharist, which our Saviour, notwithstanding, left in His Church as a symbol of that unity and charity with which He would fain have all Christians be mutually joined and united together. Wherefore this sacred and holy Synod, delivering here on this venerable and divine Sacrament of the Eucharist

that sound and genuine doctrine which the Catholic Church, instructed by our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and by His apostles, and by the Holy Ghost, who, day by day, brings to her mind all truth (St. John xiv. 26; xvi. 13), has always retained and will preserve even to the end of the world, forbids all the faithful of Christ, to presume to believe, teach, or preach henceforth, concerning the Holy Eucharist, otherwise than as is explained and defined in this present decree.

“In the first place, the holy Synod teaches and openly and simply professes, that in the august Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is truly, really, and substantially contained under the species of those sensible things. For neither are these things mutually repugnant, that our Saviour himself always sitteth at the right hand of the Father in heaven, according to the natural mode of existing, and that, nevertheless, He be, in many other places, sacramentally present to us in His own substance, by a manner of existing, which, though we can scarcely express it in words, yet can we by the understanding illuminated by faith conceive, and we ought most firmly to believe, to be possible unto God; for thus all our forefathers, as many as were in the true Church of Christ, have most openly professed that our Redeemer instituted this so admirable Sacrament at the Last Supper, when, after the blessing of the bread and wine, He testified, in express and clear words, that He gave them His own very Body and Blood; words which—recorded by the Holy Evangelists, and afterwards repeated by St. Paul, whereas they carry with them that proper and most manifest meaning in which they were understood by the Fathers—it is, indeed, a crime the most unworthy, that they should be wrested by certain contentious and wicked men, to fictitious and imaginary tropes, whereby the verity of the flesh and blood of Christ is denied, contrary to the universal sense of the Church, which, as ‘the pillar and ground of truth,’ has detested as satanical these inventions devised by impious men; she recognizing with a mind ever grateful and unforgetting this most excellent benefit of Christ. (1)

(1) Acts and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Sess. xiii., ch. 1.

“Wherefore our Saviour, when about to depart out of this world to the Father, instituted this Sacrament, in which He poured forth, as it were, the riches of His divine love toward man, making a remembrance of His wonderful works (Ps. cx. 4); and He commanded us, in the participation thereof, to venerate His memory and to show forth His death until He come (1 Cor. xi. 26) to judge the world. And He would also that this Sacrament should be received as the spiritual food of souls, whereby may be fed and strengthened those who live with His life, who said: ‘He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me’ (John vi. 58); and as an antidote whereby we may be freed from daily faults, and be preserved from mortal sins. He would, furthermore, have it be a pledge of our glory to come, and everlasting happiness, and thus be a symbol of that one body whereof He is the Head, and to which He would fain have us members, be united by the closest bond of faith, hope, and charity, ‘that we might all speak the same things, and there might be no schisms amongst us’ (1 Cor. i. 10). (1)

“The most Holy Eucharist has, indeed, this in common with the rest of the Sacraments: that it is a symbol of a sacred thing, and is a visible form of an invisible grace. But there is found in the Eucharist this excellent and peculiar thing: that the other Sacraments have, then, first the power of sanctifying when one uses them, whereas, in the Eucharist, before being used, there is the Author himself of sanctity. For the Apostles had not as yet received the Eucharist from the hand of the Lord, when, nevertheless, Himself affirmed with truth that to be His own Body which He presented to them. And this faith has ever been in the Church of God: that, immediately after the consecration, the veritable Body of our Lord, and His veritable Blood, together with His soul and divinity, are under the species of bread and wine; but the Body, indeed, under the species of bread, and the Blood under the species of wine, by the force of the words; but the Body itself under the species of wine, and the Blood under the species of bread, and the soul under both, by the force of that natural connection and concomitancy whereby the parts of

(1) Acts and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Sess. XIII. ch. ii.

Christ our Lord, 'who hath now risen from the dead to die no more' (1 Cor. vi. 9), are united together; and the divinity, furthermore, on account of the admirable hypostatical union thereof with His body and soul. Wherefore, it is most true that as much is contained under either species as under both; for Christ, whole and entire, is under the species of bread, and under any part whatsoever of that species; likewise the whole (Christ) is under the species of wine, and under the parts thereof. (1)

"And because that Christ our Redeemer declared that which He offered under the species of bread to be truly His own Body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the Church of God—and this holy Synod doth now declare it anew—that by the consecration of the bread and of the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the Body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His Blood; which conversion is, by the holy Catholic Church, suitably and properly called Transubstantiation. (2)

"Wherefore there is no room left for doubt that all the faithful of Christ may, according to the custom ever received in the Catholic Church, render in veneration the worship of latria, which is due to the true God, to this most holy Sacrament. For not, therefore, is it the less to be adored on this account, that it was instituted by Christ the Lord, in order to be received; for we believe that same God to be present therein, of whom the eternal Father, when introducing Him into the world, says: 'And let all the angels of God adore him' (Ps. xevi. 7); whom the wise men, falling down, adored (Matt. ii. 11); who, in fine, as the Scripture testifies, was adored by the apostles in Galilee.

"The holy Synod declares, moreover, that very piously and religiously was this custom introduced into the Church, that this sublime and venerable Sacrament be, with special veneration and solemnity, celebrated every year, on a certain day, and that a festival; and that it be borne reverently and with honor in processions through the streets and public places. For it is most just that there be certain appointed holy days, whereon all Chris-

tians may, with special and unusual demonstrations, testify that their minds are grateful and mindful to their common Lord and Redeemer for a benefit so unspeakable and truly divine, whereby the victory and triumph of His death are represented; and so, indeed, did it behoove victorious truth to celebrate a triumph over falsehood and heresy, that thus her adversaries, at the sight of so much splendor, and in the midst of so great joy, of the universal Church, may either pine away (Ps. cxi. 10), weakened and broken, or, touched with shame and confounded, at length repent. (1)

“The custom of reserving the Holy Eucharist in the Tabernacle is so ancient that even the age of the Council of Nicæa (ch. xiii.) recognized that usage. Moreover, as to carrying the sacred Eucharist itself to the sick, and carefully reserving it for this purpose in churches, besides that it is exceedingly conformable to equity and reason, it is also found enjoined in numerous councils, (2) and is a very ancient observance of the Catholic Church. Wherefore, this holy Synod ordains that this salutary and necessary custom is to be by all means retained. (3)

“If it is unbecoming for any one to approach to any of the sacred functions unless he approach holily, assuredly the more the holiness and divinity of this heavenly Sacrament are understood by a Christian, the more diligently ought he to give heed that he approach not to receive it, but with great reverence and holiness, especially as we read in the apostle those words full of terror: ‘He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself’ (1 Cor. xi. 29). Wherefore, he who would communicate ought to recall to mind the precept of the apostle: ‘Let a man prove himself’ (1 Cor. xi. 28). Now ecclesiastical usage declares that necessary proof to be, that no one, conscious to himself of mortal sin, how contrite soever he may seem to himself, ought to approach to the sacred Eucharist without previous sacramental confession. This, the holy Synod

(1) Acts and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Sess. XIII., ch. vii.

(2) Council of Rheims, ch. ii. 10; Labbé, V., 1693; Council of Lateran under Innocent III., ch. xxvi.; Council of Ancyra, ch. vi.; Council of Agatha, ch. xv.

(3) Acts, etc., of Council of Trent, ch. vi.

hath decreed, is to be invariably observed by all Christians, even by those priests on whom it may be incumbent by their office to celebrate, provided the opportunity of a confessor do not fail them; but if, in an urgent necessity, a priest should celebrate without previous confession, let him confess as soon as possible. (1)

“Now, as to the use of this Holy Sacrament, our Fathers (2) have rightly and wisely distinguished three ways of receiving it. For they have taught that some receive it sacramentally only, to wit, sinners; others, spiritually only, those, to wit, who, eating in desire that heavenly bread which is set before them, are, by a lively faith ‘which worketh by charity’ (Gal. v. 6), made sensible of the fruit and usefulness thereof; whereas the third class receive it both sacramentally and spiritually—and these are they who so prove and prepare themselves beforehand as to approach to this divine table ‘clothed with the wedding garment’ (Matt. xxii. 11, 12). Now, as to the reception of the Sacrament, it was always the custom, in the Church of God, that laymen should receive the communion from priests; but that priests, when celebrating should communicate themselves; which custom, as coming down from an apostolical tradition, ought, with justice and reason, to be retained. And, finally, this holy Synod, with true fatherly affection, admonishes, exhorts, begs, and beseeches, through the bowels of the mercy of our God, that all and each of those who bear the Christian name would now, at length, agree and be of one mind in this sign of unity, in this bond of charity, in this symbol of concord; and that, mindful of the so great majesty and the so exceeding love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His own beloved soul as the price of our salvation, and gave us His own flesh to eat, they would believe and venerate these sacred mysteries of His Body and Blood with such constancy and firmness of faith, with such devotion of soul, with such piety and worship, as to be able frequently to receive that supersubstantial bread, and that it may be to them truly the life of the soul, and the perpetual health of their mind; that, being invigorated by the

(1) Acts, etc., Council of Trent, Sess. XIII., ch. vii.

(2) St. Augustine against the Donatists; St. Prosper in the Book of Sentences.

strength thereof, they may, after the journeying of this miserable pilgrimage, be able to arrive at their heavenly country, there to eat, without any veil, that same bread of angels which they now eat under the sacred veils."

This doctrine is clear and explicit, supported by Holy Writ and the uniform, unwavering testimony of tradition in all the Churches of the East and West. The Reformers did not at first dare to assail so well-known a truth; and, in their endeavors to set at naught the plain words of Scripture, no two of them agreed.

Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper; but He had previously announced the great mystery, and made it a test, as it were, of fidelity to Him.

He had multiplied the loaves and fishes in the desert, and the people followed Him in throngs but He sought to raise their minds to spiritual things. "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you." Even then they did not understand that He was to give them a food of an order they knew not. They asked a sign, and He brought them back again to the same subject. "Amen, amen, I say to you: Moses gave you not bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world." "They said, therefore, unto him: Lord, give us always this bread. And Jesus said to them: I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me, shall not hunger; and he that believeth in me, shall not thirst." "The Jews, therefore, murmured at him, because he had said: I am the living bread which came down from heaven." "Jesus therefore answered, and said to them: Murmur not among yourselves;" and, after declaring His mission from the Father, He repeated the declaration: "I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that, if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world. The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying: How can

this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread which came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever. These things he said, teaching in the synagogue, in Capharnaum."

Words could not be more stronger, or more clearly and distinctly stated and repeated. The manna eaten by the Israelites was but a figure of Him. That was eaten and gave a temporal life. His flesh and blood were to be eaten and drunk to give eternal life. This eating was to make a union between Him and the believer, so that the believer should live by Him as He lived by the Father. Seven times does He repeat the expression, "Eat me," "Eat my flesh," "Eat of this bread," and "This bread is my flesh." The Jews, as their murmurs showed, so understood it; but, instead of explaining or modifying His language, our Lord made it stronger and more emphatic; nor was it only the mass of the Jews who had often criticised His doctrine, and refused to follow Him, who were shocked; many of those who had hitherto listened to Him with eagerness, and had believed in Him, began to waver in their faith. "Many, therefore, of his disciples, hearing of it, said: This saying is hard, and who can hear it? But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said to them: Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you that believe not."

He made it, in fact, a test of faith. This doctrine was vital—the spirit and life; the spirit quickening his whole teaching.

“For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray him. And he said: Therefore did I say to you that no man can come to me, unless it be given him by my Father. After this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”

He not only made no effort to recall them; but, as it were, sought to apply the test again.

“Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed, and have known that thou art the Christ the Son of God. Jesus answered them: Have I not chosen you twelve; and one of you is a devil? Now he meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for this same was about to betray him; whereas he was one of the twelve.”

The inference is irresistible that, although St. Peter spoke from his heart and answered for the belief of his brethren, yet that Judas did not believe, but remained hypocritically from sordid motives. And this whole discourse is at once linked with the scene at the Last Supper, where our Lord pointed out His betrayer, who sealed His destruction there by an unworthy communion (St. John vi. 27-72).

The institution of the Holy Eucharist, shadowed forth in the discourse at Capharnaum, is thus recorded by St. Matthew: “And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat: This is my Body. And taking the chalice, he gave thanks; and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remissions of sins” (St. Matt. xxvi. 26-28).

St. Mark uses almost the same language: “And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessing, broke, and gave to them, and said: Take ye, this is my Body. And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, he gave to them; and they all drank of it. And he said to them: This is my Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many” (St. Mark xvi. 22-23).

St. Luke records it: “And taking bread, he gave thanks, and brake, and gave to them, saying: This is my Body which is

given for you: do this for a commemoration of me. In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the New Testament in my Blood, which shall be shed for you" (St. Luke xxii. 19, 20).

St. Paul, taught by our Lord himself, writes thus to the Corinthians: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye and eat: this is my Body which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the New Testament in my Blood: this do ye, as often as ye shall drink, for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink this chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord until he come. Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 23-29).

The twelve apostles had assembled with our Lord to eat the Paschal Lamb, a type and figure of Him who was called by St. John the Baptist, "The Lamb of God," and by St. John the Evangelist, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The promise at Capharnaum is here fulfilled. He had promised to give His body to be eaten, and His blood to be drunk; and He here gives them under the form of bread and wine, saying: "This is my Body; this is my Blood."

Those who insist on taking the Bible without note or comment endeavor to explain these words to mean the very opposite of what they read—to put such a construction on them as would have satisfied the Jews at Capharnaum, and made them all His followers. Catholics take the words of Jesus Christ as they are plainly and distinctly given: so the Church has ever bid them take the words; and when, in these later centuries, sect after sect calls on them to reject the words in their plain and evident

meaning, they answer firmly, with Saint Peter, turning to our Blessed Lord himself, who promised to abide forever with His Church, and they ask Him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Catholics have, in favor of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, the plain words of our Lord himself, as recorded by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. Paul; they have the unanimous consent of all Christian Churches of the East and West, as against those who, in the sixteenth century, revolted from the Latin Church, and, with Luther, maintained that the Body and Blood were really present, and the bread and wine also; or, with Calvin, that they were present in a spiritual manner only, but that the bread and wine remained bread and wine; or, with Zuingle, whose idea is now that of the mass of Protestants, that there is no presence at all—that it is all figurative. While they have been thus discordant, unsupported by the words of Scripture or the teaching of the Churches which introduced the faith, the Catholic, bowing to the teaching of the divine Founder of his faith, takes His words in simple faith, believing that He is God, and that He who created the world out of nothing, who changed water into wine, could easily do all that His words imply.

The Holy Eucharist, as the Council of Trent notes, differs from the other Sacraments in its permanent character, in its existence apart from the act of imparting to the faithful.

The bread and wine are consecrated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This Sacrifice is the peculiar act of Divine Worship in the Church. The Holy Eucharist, consecrated in the Mass, is either then, or at other times, given to the faithful as a Sacrament.

We shall consider first the Sacrifice of the Mass.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

Sacrifice consists in the oblation or offering of some sensible thing made to God, by a priest or lawful minister, to acknowledge, by the destruction or other change of the thing offered, the sovereign power of God, and His absolute dominion over all

creatures, and to render Him the homage due to His supreme majesty.

The public worship of God must be some distinctive act, peculiar to God alone, and instituted by God Himself.

Amid the errors and false ideas introduced among men in the sixteenth century, none has been more pernicious or fatal than that which overthrew the true notion of worship. Now, among the deluded followers of those various systems, public worship is generally confined to preaching. The instruction of the people in true religious knowledge is good, but it is not the worship of God. Prayer is not distinctive of public worship. They would fail to tell what was the essential element of public worship, as distinguished from prayer or preaching.

The Catholic has no such confusion of ideas. The great act of the public worship of God is, and always has been, sacrifice. All nations have recognized this. A victim was immolated, and consumed by fire or by the believers. Europe, Asia, Africa, and America show this belief to have been universal among men. Under the patriarchs, and under the Mosaic law, sacrifices were offered; and, under Moses, minute regulations were given in regard to them, and to the priesthood, who alone were empowered to offer them. These sacrifices were, in themselves, inefficient as a becoming adoration of God; they could not, in themselves, wash away sin, or reconcile man to God. They were but types and figures, deriving all their efficacy from the Sacrifice of the Messiah, who was one day to come and offer Himself for the salvation of the world. The victims offered, representing man doomed to death by sin, were substitutes for that great victim. The Paschal Lamb, a sacrifice not offered in the temple, but in each house, also foretokened the same victim—the Lamb of God.

God zealously maintained public worship as a debt due to Him from man. It is a debt which man must pay as God wishes, and man can not of himself fix the manner or form. Under the Old Law, sacrifice was offered only before the ark of the covenant, in the tabernacle, and after its erection, in the temple. The Samaritans did, indeed, erect another temple on Mount Garizim; but though they offered the sacrifices appointed by the law, and even

had fallen priests of the house of Aaron to offer them, all their sacrifices were rejected by God. When the Samaritan woman referred the matter to our Saviour, He answered distinctly: "Salvation is with the Jews." All that the Samaritans did availed not to salvation.

Divine worship must be instituted by God—offered when, and where, and by whom God institutes. Any human will or private judgment is excluded.

Under the New Law we must look for the same conditions. There must certainly be a sacrifice as the public worship of God. It must be of divine institution. It must be connected with the Sacrifice of our Lord on the Cross, and be more than a mere type, as the Jewish sacrifices were; for the New Testament is superior to the Old.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is an offering made to God of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, under the sensible appearance of bread and wine, by Jesus Christ Himself, our invisible High-Priest, and that, through the ministry of the priests of His Church, lawfully consecrated and empowered by Him for that office; in which offering the bread and wine are, by the almighty power of God, really and substantially changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, and by the separate consecration of the two different species of bread and wine, the death of Jesus Christ is mystically represented.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the Sacrifice of Calvary—not repeated, for Jesus Christ dieth now no more; but shown forth until He comes. Time is, as it were, annihilated. Jesus Christ, as High-Priest, offers His Body and Blood to His Eternal Father as a sacrifice of adoration, homage, thanksgiving, and also of atonement and impetration.

This idea of the Eucharistic Sacrifice is plainly expressed, from the days of the apostles. St. Paul, and, soon after, St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, speak of the Christian altar (1 Cor. ix. 13; St. Ignatius ad Philippenses). St. Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Tryphon, designates the Eucharist a sacrifice, and observes that it was of this sacrifice of the Christians, which is offered up in every place, that Malachias prophesied. St. Irenæus and Ter-

tullian, in the same second century, also speak of it as a sacrifice, and each succeeding age increases the number of witnesses. A very ancient Irish treatise on the Mass, supposed to be coeval with the introduction of Christianity, says: "Another division of that pledge which has been left with the Church to comfort her, is the Body of Christ and His Blood, which are offered upon the altars of the Christians—the Body, even, which was born of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, and sits upon the right hand of the Father in heaven. . . . It is that Body, the same as it is in this great glory, which the righteous consume off God's table, that is, the holy altar." (1)

The form of the Mass, in word and rite, is worthy of the awful conception of this Sacrifice. It is the most ancient document of Christendom; and though schism rent from Catholic unity many of the Eastern Churches, the Mass has been maintained in all, different in language and vestments, but so uniform in the idea and essential parts, that the most ignorant at once recognizes it.

The central point of the Mass is the consecration of the bread and wine. This is the Sacrifice. The Communion of the priest and people consummates the Sacrifice.

THE PLACE OF THE SACRIFICE.

THE ALTAR. The Mass, according to the institution of the Church, must be offered upon an altar. All the liturgies recognize this, and from the days of the apostle the term was used. "For the first three centuries, the altar was more generally, though not always, of wood; this is evident from a variety of testimonies. Tradition has handed down the altar in the form of a wooden table, upon which St. Peter, as it is said, was accustomed to offer up the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass, in the house of the patrician Pudens, at Rome, where it is still preserved with much respect in the church of St. Pudentiana. St. Athanasius, St. Optatus of Milevi, and St. Augustine, also, notice altars of wood in speaking of the ravages of the

(1) See the whole extract in O'Curry's Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History, p. 377.

Arians. (1) From the earliest times, however, it is certain that it was customary to celebrate Mass in the catacombs, upon the tombs of the apostles and martyrs, not only at Rome, but in every other portion of the Church of Christ. The slab of marble which covered the sepulchre, was made to serve as the altar table, and the low-browed arched recess that spanned it merely left sufficient space for the priest to perform the sacred Eucharistic mysteries. When the altar, as occasion happened, was not the tomb of a martyr, it was sometimes of an oblong cubic figure, and, for almost fourteen centuries, it has been a universal custom to have that part of the altar on which the Eucharist is consecrated, of stone or marble."

When the Christians were at last enabled to practice their religion openly, churches were erected as temples for divine worship, and in these the altar was placed directly over the tomb of the martyr in the catacombs. Where this could not be done, some portion of the relics of a saint was invariably enclosed in it, and this usage prevails to the present day, the altar stone on which the chalice is placed having relics in it. "Not only did this custom call to the remembrance of the faithful, the brethren whose souls are described by St. John as reposing under the mystic altar of heaven (Apoc. vi. 9), but it furnished them with an admonition of their duty to lay down their lives like the martyrs, if required, in the profession of the faith of Him who was crucified for their redemption."

THE SANCTUARY. The part of the church where the altar is, is the sanctuary, which is cut off from the rest of the church by a railing or screen; the latter, in the Greek Church, still hides the priest during much of the Mass. In the West it was gradually made more open, often in the form of the beautiful rood-screens, and finally became a mere railing.

THE NAVE, or main body of the church, is for the use of the faithful.

THE ADORNMENT AND SERVICE OF THE ALTAR. The table of the altar is covered with a linen cloth. As early as the year 370,

(1) St. Athanasius, Epist. ad solit. vitam agentes; St. Optatus, contra Parmen. Lib. vi.; St. Augustine, Ep. i. ad Bonif.

St. Optatus, of Milevi, mentions this practice as one everywhere observed; and the Sacramentary of St. Gelasius has a form for blessing the linen cloths set apart for this use. For more than a thousand years a custom has prevailed universally, throughout the Latin Church, of having the altar at all times overspread with this altar-cloth. Over this, at the celebration of the Mass, is laid a second species of altar-cloth, called the corporal; this was originally large enough to cover the whole altar, but is now reduced so that it covers only the part immediately before the priest.

“No sooner did the Christian religion behold the erection, for her service, of those sumptuous edifices which Constantine reared throughout his empire, than her altars became the principal object of devotion and ornament. (1) The altar was overshadowed by a canopy resting on four pillars, and surmounted by a cross. In this dome-like structure hung a silver vessel, often in the form of a dove, in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept. In time this vessel took its present shape, that of the cup of the manna, on Jewish coins, and received the name of the canopy, ciborium, though its proper term is pyx; while the canopy in which it is kept became the tabernacle, an ornamental repository rising from the rear of the altar table, directly before the priest. In Italy the tabernacle is called by the old name, ciborio.

“The early Christians used lamps to give splendor to the sacred institution, as we see in Acts xx. 7, 8, and also for light; when they were forced to offer their sacred rites in the catacombs, amid the gloom of those subterranean recesses, they required light; but, as oil was not so easily carried, they first introduced candles made of wax, which the world soon borrowed from the Church. After peace was acquired, these candles and lamps were still retained to shed splendor and brilliancy around; and, by the use of perfumed oil and wax, a sweet fragrance was diffused through the church. The use of candles is retained to this day as a symbol of joy, a type of faith, and of the good example which we should give—a figure used by our Lord himself—and also to remind us of those heroic early Christians who first introduced

(1) Rock's Hierurgia, 738.

them. On our modern altars there are by rule six candles, three on each side of the tabernacle. These should properly be of wax, and all the blessings of candles in the Church service, on Candlemas day and Holy Saturday, refer to the material as the product of bees. Flowers and vases were not forgotten by the ancient Christians, in the decoration of their churches, and were used especially on their altars. St. Jerome praises Nepotian for his zeal in bestowing these floral decorations on churches.

“All antiquity show the reverence paid to the altar. This did not consist only in the language used; it was manifested in other ways. From time immemorial, Latins, Greeks, and Orientals have been accustomed to bow to the altar on entering the church. From this respect felt towards the altar, as the shrine of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, the church became an asylum. As at the temple of Jerusalem a laver stood in the court, a vase of blessed or holy water stood at the entrance of the Christian church, and each one entering signed himself with it, with the sign of the cross, to mark the purity of heart and conscience that should characterize all who entered there.”

THE CHALICE AND PATEN. For the celebration of the Mass, the priest has a chalice, now generally of silver or gold, or plated with those metals, and a paten, a plate of the same material. These are solemnly blessed and anointed for the use of the altar, and are kept and handled with the greatest reverence, as we have seen in the ordination service.

THE HOST. Our Divine Redeemer, in instituting the Holy Eucharist, used unleavened cakes. This is a fact concerning which no doubt can be entertained for a moment, as the Evangelists all concur that it was the first day of the azymes, or unleavened bread. Hence, the Latin Church has, from time immemorial, employed unleavened bread for the Host. This is made thin and circular, and bears upon it either the figure of Christ or the initials I. H. S. The Maronites and Armenians also use unleavened bread, though the Greek Church has come to use leavened. The expression in the Apocalypse: “To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna, and I will give him a white counter, and, in the counter, a new name written” (Apoc. ii. 17), is a

beautiful allusion to the Host used in the Mass. Indeed, the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist can alone give sense and meaning to this passage.

THE FORM OF THE MASS.

The form of the Mass is known as the Liturgy, and this term is used by Saint Luke in Acts xiii. 2, where our English translation has: "And, as they were *ministering* to the Lord, and fasting." Erasmus translates it "*sacrificing*," the evident allusion being to the sacrifice of the Mass, the custom of offering which fasting has now become a rule.

"In the absence of history, both religion and decorum would prevent our supposing, even for an instant, that the Apostles did not observe any certain rites in offering up the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Undoubtedly, they were unanimous in agreeing with Saint Paul, who admonished the Corinthians to 'Let all things be done decently and in order.' St. John, in the Apocalypse (i. 10-13, iv. 2-4, v. 1-12, vi. 9, 10, viii. 3, 4), gives an idea of the Mass as offered. We behold an assembly presided over by a venerable pontiff, seated on a throne, and encircled by twenty-four ancients or priests. The white robe, the garment reaching to the feet, together with the golden girdle, are enumerated as sacerdotal vestments; the harps, the canticles, and a choir, gave the aid of music to the solemn rite; of the instruments employed in sacrifice, an altar, golden candlesticks, a golden censor with its fire and smoking incense, and the sealed book, are specifically mentioned. There is present a lamb, as it were slain, hence a victim, standing as a priest; yet to him divine honors and supreme adoration are exhibited by every creature in heaven and on earth." (1) He is, therefore, at once, Priest, Victim, and God.

In the earliest ages of the Church, St. Irenæus, in the year 167, remarks: "Either St. John, in order to shadow forth the glory and the splendor of the adoration which all the choirs of angels and saints are continually exhibiting to God within His sanctuary of heaven, must have used an imagery and language descriptive of the ceremonial practiced by the Christians of his time, in

(1) Rock's Hierurgia, pp. 263-5.

their assemblies on the Lord's day; or else the liturgy of the Holy Sacrifice, or the Mass, must have been modelled according to the vision of that favorite disciple of our Lord." (1)

In either case, the Liturgy or Mass bears deeply impressed upon it the type of apostolical institution.

We can scarcely doubt that our Lord, directing them to offer the Holy Sacrifice, in the words recorded by the Evangelists, gave the definite form after His resurrection. No one who reads the Jewish rite for offering the Paschal Lamb, even as now practiced, with the additions and changes caused in eighteen centuries, can fail to see that the Mass was drawn up by one to whom that rite was familiar. There are resemblances so striking, that it is impossible that the Mass could have assumed its present form long after the Christians became distinct from the Jews. The chant of the Preface is said to be one used in the service of the temple; its form is found in the Paschal service. The existence of a definite form seems indicated in St. Paul's charge to St. Timothy: "Hold the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith, and in the love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. i. 13). (2)

St. Justin Martyr, about the year 150, has left us an interesting description in the first of his apologies addressed to the Emperors Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. "To him who presides over the brethren is presented bread and a cup of water and wine, which he, taking, gives praise and glory to the Father, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and returns thanks, in many prayers, that such gifts have been vouchsafed to us. These offices being duly performed, the whole assembly in acclamation answers, 'Amen;' then the ministers, whom we call deacons, give to each one present, to partake of the blessed bread, and the wine and water, and take some to the sick. This food we call the Eucharist, of which they alone are allowed to partake who believe the doctrines taught us to be true, and have been washed by baptism for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration. Nor do we take these gifts as common bread and com-

(1) *Ib.*, p. 266, citing St. Irenæus *adversus Hæreses*. Lib. iv., c. xvii., xviii.

(2) *Form of Service for the Two First Nights of the Feast of Passover*. New York 869, p. 28.

mon drink; but in the same manner as our Saviour, Jesus Christ, incarnate by the word of God for our salvation, took flesh and blood, so we have been taught that the food wherewith, by change, our blood and flesh are nourished, being blessed by the prayer of His word, becomes the flesh and blood of that very incarnate Jesus." (1)

The Mass was said, in the East, in Syriac, Chaldaic, Armenian, and Coptic; and, through most of the Roman Empire, in Greek; and, in the West, in time, universally in Latin. These languages have been retained. Latin became a general language, and the modern tongues are undergoing such constant changes, that the Church wisely adheres to the Latin, which all of any education can understand, and those who have not acquired a knowledge of the language, by means of their prayer-books and custom, readily distinguish and follow. Where other languages have been tried, they soon became obsolete, and were gladly abandoned for the more general language, Latin.

The Mass, as preserved in the oldest Sacramentaries of Gelasius and St. Gregory the Great, in the Bobbio Missal, in the ancient Irish treatise on the Mass, is identical in its main features with that now universally used in the Church.

The High Mass is preceded by a ceremony, which has its counterpart in the aspersions of the Mosaic law. This is the sprinkling of the congregation with blessed or holy water. The priest comes out in alb, and intones an anthem from the fiftieth Psalm: "Thou shall sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed;" though, in the Paschal season, another anthem from the forty-seventh chapter of the prophet Ezechiel is substituted, beginning: "I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple." The priest then descends the aisle, sprinkling the congregation. When he returns to the foot of the altar, he repeats several versicles, and concludes with this prayer: "Hear us, O Holy Lord, Almighty Father Eternal God, and vouchsafe to send Thy holy angel from heaven, to guard, cherish, protect, visit, and defend all who are assembled in this place. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. R. Amen."

(1) St. Justin, *Apologia* 1; Hagæ Comitium, 742, pp. 82, 83.

The priest then returns to the sacristy, and assuming the chasuble, (1) the sacrificial robe, he enters the sanctuary, preceded by at least a clerk; he carries in his hand the chalice, covered with the paten, on which lies a host, the whole concealed beneath the veil, which corresponds to the color of the chasuble.

High Mass is the Liturgy celebrated by the priest or bishop, with some solemn ceremonies omitted in Low Mass. Where the officiant is attended by a deacon and subdeacon, it is called a Solemn High Mass, and Pontifical, if a bishop officiates. In these Masses the responses are chanted by the choir, which also sings the Gloria in Excelsis and the Nicene Creed. In a Low Mass the responses are made by an acolyte or clerk.

After placing the chalice on the altar, and opening the missal, the priest makes the sign of the cross, and begins the first part of the Mass, called the Mass of the Catechumens.

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. An antiphon, from the forty-second Psalm, "I will go in to the altar of God." R. "To God who giveth joy to my youth," is followed by the whole of that psalm, said responsively, and closed, as psalms almost universally are, with the doxology. Then the antiphon is repeated, and the versicle, "Our help is in the name of the Lord," is responded to, "Who made heaven and earth."

Then, bowing his head, the priest repeats the general confession: "I confess to Almighty God," etc., acknowledging his sins before heaven and earth, and striking his breast in sign of contrition, beseeching all the blessed in heaven and his brethren on earth to pray to the Lord our God for him.

The response is solemn: "May Almighty God be merciful unto thee, and, forgiving thee thy sins, bring thee to everlasting life. Amen."

The acolytes then make the same confession, and the priest responds. After the Amen, he pronounces the priestly form. "May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant us ✠ pardon, absolution, and remission of our sins."

Then follow versicles and responses of Scriptural origin, closing

(1) For explanations of vestments, see Holy Orders.

with a versicle that occurs constantly in the Church service. "The Lord be with you," a blessing which includes all others, to which the people always reply, "And with Thy spirit," to show that the divine aid and presence we seek is rather for our soul and its good, than for the body and material prosperity.

Then the priest, joining his hands, says: "Let us pray," and ascends the steps to the altar, reciting another prayer to be cleansed from sin, so as to approach with pure mind to the holy of holies. Our Lord, who praised the publican in the temple, confessing his sins and striking his breast, surely instituted this.

He bows down and kisses the altar, praying to God to forgive his sins through the merits of the saints whose relics are there.

In High Masses the priest blesses incense and incenses the altar, renewing the daily rite of the priests of the Old Law, offering incense to the Lord.

A short prayer, called the Introit, generally a passage from Scripture, follows. So far, the words have been Latin, except the response, Amen, from the Hebrew. The third of the languages set upon the cross follows. "Kyrie eleïson, Christe eleïson, Kyrie eleïson," are thrice repeated, meaning, in Greek (*Κυριε ελεησον, Χριστε ελεησον*), "Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy," and being an appeal to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for forgiveness. This has been thus far the sole burthen of the prayers—a prolonged cry for mercy and pardon.

Then hope fills the heart, and as though like the world which had groaned for four thousand years under the yoke of sin, he hears the chant of the angels, the priest stands before the altar with extended arms, and intones that canticle begun by the angels: "Glory be to God on high!" It is the most magnificent hymn of praise, and contains, perhaps, the sublimest thought that ever was conceived, thanking God—not for His benefits to man, creation, redemption, the promise of heaven, but thanking Him for His own glory, man forgetting self to think only of God and His attributes. Yet, even amid this joy, the cry for mercy wells up, as if not the holiest joy could cause man to forget his misery.

Then follow the Collects of the day, prayers which, for con-

ciseness of form, richness of expression, and depth of meaning, have never been equalled. Familiar to many Protestants, as translated in the Book of Common Prayer, these Collects have been greatly admired to this day, and the attempts to imitate them have always shown the weakness of the origin of the innovators. After the Collects, the priest reads a part of Scripture taken from the Epistles, Acts, or Apocalypse, or from the sapiential or prophetic books of the Old Testament, and, on some occasions, from others. After responding, "Thanks be to God," at the close of the Epistle, the clerk or acolyte goes up to the altar, and takes the missal, which has hitherto been on the right side of the altar, descends to the foot of the steps, kneels, and takes it up to the left or Gospel side, as if to show that the light of faith, rejected by the Jews, had been carried to the Gentiles. Then the people rise, while the priest, after the "*Munda cor meum*," a prayer that his heart and his lips may be cleansed, so that he may worthily announce the Gospel, goes to the Gospel side, and, making the sign of the cross on his forehead, lips, and breast, reads the Gospel of the day—a selection from one of the four Evangelists. And, out of respect, the faithful always rise in any service when a part of the Gospels is read.

The selections of the portions for the Epistles and Gospels of the year, now in use in the Church, is very ancient, and was based on the custom of the Jews. The present selections are said to have been arranged by St. Jerome, about the year 376, at the request of Pope Damascus.

Between these selections from Holy Writ are said the Gradual, Tract, and sometimes a hymn, called a Prose or Sequence. (1) In Solemn Masses the priest again incenses the missal and altar, and the deacon, after receiving the priest's blessing, chants the Gospel at the Gospel side, an acolyte standing with lighted candles on either side of the subdeacon, who holds the book of the Gospels.

The priest closes the Gospel, saying: "May our sins be blotted out by the words of the Gospel;" to which the acolyte responds:

(1) There are four: "*Victimæ Paschali*," at Easter; "*Veni Sancte Spiritus*," at Pentecost; "*Lauda Sion*," at Corpus Christi; and the celebrated "*Dies Iræ*," at All Souls.

“Praise be to Thee, O Christ.” In Solemn Masses, the deacon carries the book to the priest, who kisses it, and is incensed by the deacon. After this the celebrant, standing before the middle of the altar, recites the Nicene Creed, an ancient profession of faith, as adopted by the Councils of Nice and Constantinople; during which priest and people stand, but kneel at the words: “And He was made man.” The Creed closes with the beautiful “The Lord be with you.” As long as the Discipline of the Secret was enforced, this was the period at which the Catechumens were dismissed from the assembly, terminating the Mass of the Catechumens—the word mass, *missa*, coming from *dimissio*. All who were not baptized, and all penitents, except those who had been really pardoned, were prohibited from attending the rest of the Sacrifice. (1)

The Mass of the Faithful begins with the Offertory, a selection of Scripture, varying with the day. At Low Mass, the priest here unveils the chalice, and unfolds the corporal, the deacon and subdeacon assisting at High Mass; then, taking the paten with the host, the priest elevates it with both hands, saying this prayer, in which he anticipates the great action, and offers the host, not as it is, but as it is to become:

“Accept, O Holy Father, almighty and eternal God, this unspotted host, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offenses, and negligences, and for all here present; as, also, for all faithful Christians, both living and dead; that it may avail both me and them to life everlasting.”

Laying the host on the corporal, the priest, or, in High Masses, the deacon and subdeacon, pour wine and a little water into the chalice, and, making the sign of the cross over it, he prays that we may become partakers of Christ’s redemption, as He vouchsafed to become partaker of our human nature. Then he offers the chalice solemnly to God, in this impressive prayer: “We offer

(1) The Discipline of the Secret, which is of Apostolic origin, enacted that the faithful, in general, should conceal the Creed, the Sacraments, and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, from all knowledge of the uninitiated; and the priesthood were required to convey the substance and formularies of the Liturgy, by word of mouth. They were prohibited from writing them. Emanuel a Schelstrate, *De Disciplina Arcani*, Rome, 1685.

unto Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of Salvation, beseeching Thy clemency, that it may ascend before Thy divine Majesty, as a sweet odor, for our salvation, and that of the whole world." Then follow prayers, beseeching God to look favorably upon the Sacrifice to be offered to Him; and, in High Masses, the offerings and the altar are here incensed. Proceeding next to the Epistle side of the altar, the priest washes the tips of his fingers, reciting the beautiful twenty-fifth Psalm, beginning with the sixth verse.

Renewing the offering once more, he turns to the people and says: "Brethren, pray that my and your Sacrifice may be acceptable to God the Father"—that the faithful may not consider themselves mere spectators, but may remember that it is their Sacrifice also. They reply in this sense: "May the Lord receive the Sacrifice from thy hands, to the praise and glory of His name; to our benefit, also, and that of all His holy Church." A varying prayer with the day is then recited in a low tone, whence it is called Secret. Raising his voice at the close, he pronounces these words: "World without end," followed by his usual salutation: "The Lord be with you." As the most solemn part of the Mass is now rapidly approaching, he again calls on the people to collect their thoughts by the words: "Lift up your hearts." The clerk replies for the people: "We have lifted them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to our Lord God." "It is meet and just," reply the people.

Then the priest intones, with a peculiar chant, the Preface, a prayer of most ancient form, varying slightly in some of the Masses, but always ending: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth! heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

This solemn part of the Liturgy is the same in the Latin and Oriental rites, and is especially described in the ancient document, the Apostolical Constitutions. The bell is rung at its close, to call attention again to the solemn act about to be performed.

The Canon of the Mass then begins, and closes with the Pater Noster. It opens with a prayer to God to accept and bless this

holy, unspotted Sacrifice, which is offered for the holy Catholic Church, its peace, its preservation, unity, and good government; for the Pope and all who profess the Catholic faith. The priest prays then secretly for any for whom he specially offers the Sacrifice, and continues in these words, which indicate the share the people should take in the Sacrifice: "Be mindful, also, of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known to Thee, for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee, this Sacrifice of praise for themselves, their families, and friends—for the redemption of their souls, for the health and salvation they hope for—and who pay their vows to Thee, the eternal, living, and true God." Then, to illustrate the Communion of Saints, it is said to be offered: Communicating with and honoring the Blessed Virgin and many illustrious saints of various ages, "by whose merits and prayers, grant," the priest asks of God, "that we may be always defended by the help of Thy protection." Then, after renewing the oblation, he proceeds to rehearse the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, and consecrates the host, using the words of Christ. Then a hush, more eloquent than words, a silence of awe, falls upon the church; the music ceases; all kneel in silent adoration. "To excite his own devotion, let each one occupy his mind with the real, though shrouded, presence of Jesus, now throned upon the altar, around which cherubim and seraphim are kneeling lowly down in worship." Nor should he forget that this is really the Sacrifice; Jesus Christ stands here as high-priest, offering His Body and Blood for our sins, and we should offer it through Him to the Eternal Father, that we may venture to approach in spirit the throne of His awful Majesty. Then we offer it to render to God all the adoration, homage, awe, veneration, and worship that are His due; to thank Him for His infinite attributes; to thank Him for the glory bestowed on His Divine Son, and for all that Jesus Christ suffered for love of us; to thank Him for the glory of the sacred humanity, and all the graces and glory bestowed on His Blessed Mother and all the Saints; for all the graces bestowed on mankind, especially on ourselves, who are so often ungrateful, and to beg new graces, and, above all, the grace of final perseverance for ourselves and all dear to us. Then the

priest consecrates the wine, again using the words of Jesus Christ and again all bow in silent prayer.

This is a moment in a Catholic church which never fails to impress deeply every religious heart, no matter how prejudice may have biased it against the true faith. To many it has come as a revelation of what worship really is.

Again, the priest offers this "Pure Victim, this holy Victim, this unspotted Victim, the holy Bread of Life everlasting, and Chalice of perpetual salvation." He prays that God who vouchsafed to look on the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech will look on this holy Sacrifice and unspotted Victim—the Divine Lamb; and he prays that God would command it to be carried by the hands of His holy Angel to His altar on high, in the sight of His divine Majesty; and that all who shall receive this most sacred Body and Blood may be filled with every heavenly grace and blessing.

Then follows a special prayer for the dead, soliciting for them a place of refreshment, light, and peace. Then he prays for all present, that God would associate them in His glory with the illustrious saints who are named in the diptych, "not in consideration of our merit, but of thy own gratuitous mercy. Through Christ our Lord, through whom, O Lord, thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless, and give us all these good things. Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, is to Thee, God the Father Almighty, in the Union of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory."

Then the Our Father is solemnly chanted by the priest; the clerk saying the last petition, which the priest takes up, asking that we may be delivered from all evils of soul and body. He then prepares to complete the Sacrifice by partaking of the Victim offered, and wishing the people peace, saying: "The peace of the Lord be ever with you." He breaks the host, and, putting a small part in the chalice, pronounces the following prayer: "May this mixture and consecration of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be to us, who receive it, effectual to life everlasting." Then, recalling the Paschal Lamb, and the epithet based on it, he says, striking his heart: "Lamb of God, who

takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us!" This he repeats thrice, substituting the last time the petition, "Give us peace!"

Extending this prayer for peace, he prepares for his Communion, praying by virtue thereof to be delivered from all his iniquities, and to be made to adhere to the commandments of God, and never to be separated from him. And, confessing his unworthiness, he asks that his Communion may not turn to his condemnation, but may be a safeguard and remedy of soul and body. Then taking the Host in his hands, he says: "I will take the bread of heaven, and call upon the name of the Lord;" and, striking his breast, he says, almost in the words of the Centurion (St. Matt. viii. 8), "Lord, I am not worthy that thou should enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed."

Then, reverently taking both parts of the Sacred Host in his right hand, and signing with it the sign of the cross upon himself, he says: "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul unto life everlasting;" and then receives the Holy Communion. After a short meditation on the stupendous mystery, he uncovers the chalice, adores the Sacred Blood, and, gathering on the paten any fragments of the host, puts them in the chalice, and, taking it in his hands, he recites the 13th verse of the 115th Psalm, and receives the Precious Blood, saying: "The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul unto life everlasting."

The acolytes then ascend to the Epistle side of the altar, and wine is poured into the chalice, which the priest then drinks, with an appointed prayer. A second ablution is also made, in which the wine is poured over the tips of the fingers which have touched the sacred species.

If any of the faithful are to communicate, they approach the railing at the priest's Communion, and the acolytes then kneeling at the side of the steps, say the Confiteor. The priest, turning, pronounces the Misereatur and Indulgentiam, and opening the tabernacle, takes out the pyx or ciborium, and, descending to the altar-rail, gives Communion to each one, saying: "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul to life everlasting."

After the ablutions, the acolytes restore the missal to the Epistle side, and the priest reads the Communion, and the Post Communion, which vary from day to day. Then, after the usual salutation, he says, still turned toward the people: "Go, it is the dismissal," or, on some occasions: "Let us bless the Lord." Then, bowing before the altar, he prays that the Sacrifice which he, though unworthy, has offered, may be acceptable to the Holy Trinity, and be a propitiation for himself and for all in whose behalf he offered it.

Then, looking up to heaven, he invokes the blessing of Almighty God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—upon them. The Mass concludes by the opening portion of the Gospel of St. John, recited at the Gospel side; though, if the Gospel of the day has been displaced by any feast in the earlier part of the Mass, it is now recited. At its close, the acolyte responds: "Thanks be to God." The priest, taking the chalice, paten, and veil, descends from the altar, and re-enters the sacristy.

Such is the grand Christian Liturgy, the Mass; addressed entirely to God Himself; Scriptural and sublime in all its parts; a form in which man is nothing, presumes nothing, recognizes his sinfulness, and appeals constantly for God's mercy. No man-made creed ever devised a liturgy so overpowering, so worthy of the Creator, so fitted to man's wants.

When carrying out the Communion of Saints, Masses offered for the soul of the departed Christian, either lying in the church before God's altar, or resting in his silent grave, the vestments are black; the opening Psalm, the Gloria in Excelsis are omitted. The Agnus Dei concludes with the words, "Give them rest," and the prayer for peace is not said, nor is a blessing given, while, before the Gospel, the mournful sequence, Dies Iræ, thrills every heart. The Jewish sacrifices for the dead and the Kaddisch have inspired this form; and as the Kaddisch was offered on the seventh and thirty-first day, and the yearly anniversary, so the Church has her week's mind, her month's mind, and her anniversary Masses for her children.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST AS A SACRAMENT.

There are three classes of communicants: some receive the Sacrament only; such are those sinners who dread not to approach the holy mysteries with polluted lips and depraved hearts, who, as the apostle says: "Eat and drink unworthily." They indeed eat and drink judgment to themselves. Others are said to receive the Holy Eucharist in spirit only: they are those who, inflamed with a lively faith that worketh by charity, participate in desire of this celestial food, from which they receive, if not the entire, at least a very considerable fruit. Lastly, there are some who receive the Holy Eucharist both spiritually and sacramentally: those who, according to the advice of the apostle, having first proved themselves, approach this divine banquet, adorned with the nuptial garment, and derive from it, in a greater or less degree, superabundant graces which are contained in this Sacrament.

When the faithful believer wishes to receive the Blessed Sacrament, he prepares, by proving himself, cleansing his conscience by the Sacrament of Penance. On the morning of Communion he proceeds, fasting from midnight, to the church, in becoming attire, and, when the bell rings at the priest's Communion, goes up to the railing, which becomes the Holy Table; gloves are removed, and the cloth is raised to prevent any particle from dropping. By special and fervent prayers he excites in his heart contrition and detestation for sin, faith in the real presence of Him whom he is soon to receive, an earnest desire to be united with his Lord.

Then, recalling the warning of our Lord, that we can not have life everlasting unless we, in this Sacrament, eat His sacred flesh and blood, and His promise to abide with those who worthily receive it, the faithful Christian, dispelling the fear that such a favor inspires, receives his Lord.

"The moment of Communion," says a pious writer, "is different from any other moment of our lives. Then we may truly exclaim: My God and my all! When we communicate, God himself is present in our little hearts, as our friend and spouse. Nothing

can be more intimate than the union that then takes place between the Creator and His creature. It is more like the Incarnation of the eternal Son of God in the womb of the Blessed Virgin than anything else. The same Son of God, the Holy One, that was born of the spotless Virgin, comes into our hearts in the Sacred Host. Think of all that is most beautiful and most precious in the world, of all the riches of the whole universe, of all the glory of heaven, and you have, as yet, but a faint idea of the wealth of a soul that has received Holy Communion. Such a soul possesses not only earth and heaven, but the Lord and Maker of heaven and earth. It is a mystery which almost baffles thought." (1)

We can, therefore, easily understand why all manuals of devotion urge, what the slightest reflection would teach all, that some time should be spent, after receiving Holy Communion, in thanking God for such a gift; in adoring the Saviour, whom we have received; in expressing sorrow for our sins, which caused Him such suffering, and are, in themselves, so base and ungrateful; and in imploring, for ourselves and all others, grace to be faithful to Him to the end.

The Holy Communion is given to the sick. A rule of the Church requires that all should receive it at Easter; and those who neglect to do so, forfeit their membership in the Church. In Catholic countries, the parish priest, after Easter, goes in a procession to the houses of his sick parishioners, to give them the Communion which they are unable to go up to the temple to receive. When the last illness stretches the Catholic on his bed of death, the Holy Communion is again brought to him as a *Viaticum*, or provision for a journey.

Whenever the Blessed Sacrament is brought to the house, respect for the Divine Guest requires that the sick-room should be made as clean and proper as possible. It may be as poor as the stable in which He chose to be born, but it can be made clean. A table should be made ready, covered with a clean linen cloth, and on it, two lighted candles, a crucifix, and holy water. None but those actually necessary to assist the sick should remain.

The room becomes, for the moment, a chapel. All who feel this will endeavor to make it so, by neatness, silence, and devout attendance. The priest, coming to give holy Viaticum, enters, saying: "Peace be to this house," to which the reply is: "And to all who dwell therein." Then, laying the corporal on the table, he places the Blessed Sacrament upon it, when he and all present kneel and adore Jesus Christ present in the Sacrament of His Love. He then sprinkles the room with holy water, and, after the Confiteor, recited by the sick person, or one in his name, the priest says the Misereatur, etc., and, taking the Blessed Sacrament, elevates it before the dying Christian, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God!" Then repeating the Domine non sum dignus, he gives the Communion to the dying, saying: "Receive, brother, the Viaticum of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may preserve thee from the malignant enemy, and bring thee to life everlasting. Amen." Then he washes his fingers in silence, and recites a prayer, beseeching God that the Communion may be, to the sick man, an eternal remedy, both of soul and body. He then blesses the sick man with the host, if any particles remain, or with his hand, and departs, reciting psalms adapted to the service.

The Holy Eucharist was instituted on the Thursday before our Lord's death. This is known in the churches as Maundy-Thursday. As it falls amid the sorrows of Holy week, amid the contemplation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, it can not be celebrated with the joy inspired by so great a favor and blessing conferred on mankind. To commemorate this fully, the feast of Corpus Christi, or of the Body of our Lord, was instituted. It arose in Northern Europe, chiefly by the exertions of Saint Juliana; and was celebrated as a feast in 1247, by Robert, Bishop of Liege, in Belgium. Pope Urban IV., in 1264, commanded its celebration throughout the Church, and Clement V., at the Council of Vienne, 1311, fixed the feast on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. It has ever since been one of the most solemn and impressive holidays of the Church, the Blessed Sacrament being borne in procession through the streets, followed by the different religious orders and confraternities, and thousands of the pious, while men of the highest rank deem it an honor to support the canopy held

over the Ostensorium. The streets are lined with greens and festive arches, and, in some places, as at Genzano, in Italy, the route is strewn with flowers arranged to form a magnificent carpet. Faith and devotion reach their highest point, and we can well understand how, once, a Protestant lady in France, seeing it, said to an incurable Catholic friend: "Why can I not believe, like you? But if I did, I should not stay here, as you do. I would drag myself on my knees after my Lord, as the woman did in the Gospel." Faith was roused in the Catholic lady's heart; she did actually drag herself after the Blessed Sacrament, and was healed. (1)

When the Blessed Sacrament is borne in procession, or exposed for veneration, it is placed in a sacred vessel called the Ostensorium, or Monstrance, in which the Sacred Host is covered with a circular glass, and encircled by rays. This is used every Sunday, at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, a service that generally follows Vespers, and in which Christ, in this invention of His love, blesses, in the priest's hand, the faithful who come to honor Him, and seek His grace and benediction.

"What shall we say of the two-fold wonders—the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Sacrament of Communion? There the Precious Blood puts on the vesture of omnipresence, and it becomes it well. Multiplied by how many hundreds of thousands of times, is it not dwelling, whole, living, and glorified, in the hosts reserved within the tabernacles of the world? Into how many thousand human hearts does it not descend daily, whole, living, and glorified, in the glory of the dread reality of Communion? Into how many thousand chalices does it not empty itself, from out the Sacred Heart in heaven, every day? The very whirling of the earth, as it makes day and night by turning to or from the sun, ministers to the longings of the Precious Blood. It is bewildering to think of the countless graces of expiation which flow daily from the Sacrifice, or the countless graces of union which flow

(1) This lady was Anne de Lafosse, and the cure, which took place on Corpus Christi, 1725, led to much discussion, and, consequently, to the strictest examination. See an account in Muller's *Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, p. 101; and in Feller, *Dictionnaire Historique*, title Lafosse (Anne Charlier).

daily from the Sacrament. In the heart of the Andes, vast interwoven and mutually-enfolding mountains cover themselves with gigantic forests. The condor, as he wheels above, looks down upon an ocean of impenetrable foliage, without a rent, or break, or insight into the green abyss. So does the Precious Blood, in Mass and Communion, mantle the whole Church with tropical exuberances of grace, as they appear, hiding the natural features of the ground with the ample folds of their verdant overgrowth. The tinklings of the Mass-bell, like new creative words, change the whole aspect of the unconscious world." (1)

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

SIN is the terrible scourge of man. Our evils, physical and moral, all spring from this one fountain. Yielding to it, man sighs to be delivered from it, hopeless and helpless in himself to rise from out its slough. In the old law, man sought, in the sacrifices of the law, types of the one only Atoning Sacrifice of Calvary—remission of sin through that Precious Blood, to be shed in a future still veiled from his eyes. Sacrifices were offered for the sins of the whole people, and each one, guilty even of inadvertent transgressions—venial sins—made his public offering through the priest. Yet there was no remission, really, in the blood of goats and calves. The prophets foretold that, under the reign of the Messias, there should be a fountain ever open for the washing of the sinner.

Penance may be considered as a virtue or as a sacrament. As a virtue, it was always necessary, even before our Saviour taught His Gospel and instituted the Holy Sacrament. Penance, as a virtue, is a gift of God which makes us deplore and hate the sins we have committed, with a firm purpose to amend, and make satisfaction for the sins committed. Penance, as a sacrament, becomes necessary as often as we may have sinned after Baptism. For those who fall into sin after Baptism, say the

Fathers of Trent, the Sacrament of Penance is as necessary to salvation, as is Baptism for those who have not been already baptized. For, as he who suffered shipwreck has no hope of safety, unless perchance he seize on some plank from the wreck; so he that suffers the shipwreck of Baptismal innocence, unless he cling to the saving plank of Penance, may abandon all hope of salvation.

Jesus Christ claimed, as man, the power to forgive sins; He claimed the right to delegate that power. His enemies were shocked at His claim. On one occasion they said in themselves, what the enemies of the Church often say openly, and even cite against her, as though Christ's enemies spoke the truth, and He, truth itself, had erred—they said within themselves: "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But our Lord revealed their hidden thought, and condemned it, saying: "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" "That you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins"—He paused, as though words were too weak an argument, and, turning from His enemies and their objections, He bade the sick man arise, take up his bed, and walk. (1)

Nothing can be clearer, more striking, more absolute. He asserted His power to forgive sins as man. It was denied; and He at once wrought a miracle to show that His words, potent to effect a bodily cure, were as potent to effect the spiritual cure. He exercised His power again and again; (2) and though His enemies murmured, He not only maintained the power, but conferred it on His apostles. To Peter, as the prince and primate of the apostles, He gave the full power: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (3) The same grant, substantially, was extended to all the apostles, when our Lord said to them: "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed

(1) Compare St. Matt. ix. 3-6; St. Mark ii. 6-11; St. Luke v. 20-25.

(2) St. Luke vii. 48, 49.

(3) St. Matt. xvi. 19.

also in heaven.” (1) Then, after His resurrection, He breathed on all the apostles, and said to them: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.” (2)

Such are the clear and unmistakable words in which the Sacrament of Penance is declared in the Scriptures, and it can not be questioned without siding against Christ with His enemies, or so commenting His words as to make them the very contrary of what they are as they stand.

The doctrine of the Church, as to the Sacrament of Penance, is thus declared by the Council of Trent: “So great, in these our days, is the multitude of various errors relative to this Sacrament, that it will be of no small public utility to have given thereof a more exact and full definition, wherein all errors having been, under the protection of the Holy Ghost, pointed out and extirpated, Catholic truth may be made clear and resplendent, which Catholic truth this holy Synod now sets before all Christians to be perpetually received.

“If such in all the regenerate were their gratitude toward God as that they constantly preserved the justice received in Baptism by His bounty and grace, there would not have been need for another Sacrament, besides that of Baptism itself, to be instituted for the remission of sins. But because God, rich in mercy, knows our frame (Ps. cii. 14), He hath bestowed a remedy of life even on those who may, after Baptism, have delivered themselves up to the servitude of sin and the power of the devil—the Sacrament, to wit, of Penance, by which the benefit of the death of Christ is applied to those who have fallen after Baptism. Penitence was, indeed, at all times necessary, in order to attain to grace and justice, for all men who had defiled themselves by any mortal sin, even for those who begged to be washed by the Sacrament of Baptism, that so, their perverseness renounced and amended, they might, with a hatred of sin and a godly sorrow of mind, detest so great an offence of God. Wherefore the prophet says: ‘Be converted, and do penance for all your iniquities, and iniquity shall not be your ruin’ (Ezech. xviii. 30). The Lord

(1) St. Matt. xviii. 18.

(2) St. John xx. 22, 23.

also said: 'Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish' (Luke xiii. 5). And Peter, the prince of the apostles, recommending penitence to sinners who were about to be initiated by Baptism, said: 'Do penance, and be baptized every one of you.' Nevertheless, neither before the coming of Christ was penitence a Sacrament, nor is it such since His coming, to any previously to Baptism. But the Lord then principally instituted the Sacrament of Penance, when being raised from the dead, He breathed upon His disciples, saying: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' (John xx. 23). By which action so signal, and words so clear, the consent of all the Fathers has ever understood that the power of forgiving and retaining sins was communicated to the apostles and their lawful successors, for the reconciling of the faithful who have fallen after Baptism. And the Catholic Church, with great reason, repudiated and condemned as heretics the Novatians, who, of old, obstinately denied that power of forgiving. Wherefore, this holy Synod, approving of and receiving as most true this meaning of those words of our Lord, condemns the fanciful interpretation of those who, in opposition to the institution of this Sacrament, falsely wrest those words to the power of preaching the word of God, and of announcing the Gospel of Christ." (1)

"For the rest, this Sacrament is clearly seen to be different from Baptism in many respects; for, besides that it is very widely different indeed in matter and form, which constitute the essence of a Sacrament, it is beyond doubt certain that the minister of Baptism need not be a judge, seeing that the Church exercises judgment on no one who has not entered therein through the gate of Baptism. 'For what have I,' saith the apostle, 'to do to judge them that are without?' (1 Cor. v. 12). It is otherwise with those who are of the household of the faith, whom Christ our Lord has once, by the laver of Baptism, made the members of His own Body; for such, if they should afterwards have defiled themselves by any crime, he would no longer have them cleansed

(1) Acts and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Session XIV., under Pope Julius III., Nov. 5, 1551, Ch. I.

by a repetition of Baptism—that being nowise lawful in the Catholic Church—but be placed as criminals before this tribunal, that by the sentence of the priests they might be freed, not once, but as often as, being penitent, they should flee thereunto, from the sins they have committed. Furthermore, one is the fruit of Baptism, and another that of Penance. For by Baptism putting on Christ, we are made therein entirely a new creature, obtaining a full and entire remission of all sins; unto which newness and entireness, however, we are noways able to arrive by the Sacrament of Penance, without many tears and great labors on our parts, the divine justice demanding this; so that Penance has justly been called, by the Holy Fathers, a laborious kind of Baptism. (1) And this Sacrament of Penance is, for those who have fallen after Baptism, necessary unto salvation, as Baptism itself is for those who have not as yet been regenerated.” (2)

“The holy Synod doth furthermore teach, that the form of the Sacrament of Penance, wherein its force principally consists, is placed in those words of the minister, “I absolve thee,” etc., to which words, indeed, certain prayers are, according to the custom of the holy Church, laudably joined, which, nevertheless, by no means regard the essence of that form, neither are they necessary for the administration of the Sacrament itself. But the acts of the penitent himself, to-wit: contrition, confession, and satisfaction, are, as it were, the matter of this Sacrament; which acts, inasmuch as they are, by God’s institution, required in the penitent for the integrity of this Sacrament, and for the full and perfect remission of sins, are for this reason called the parts of Penance. But the thing signified indeed, and the effect of this Sacrament, as far as regards its force and efficacy, is reconciliation with God, which sometimes, in persons who are pious, and who receive the Sacrament with devotion, is wont to be followed by peace and serenity of conscience, with exceeding consolation of spirit. The holy Synod, whilst delivering these things touching the parts and the effect of this Sacrament, condemns, at the same

(1) St. Gregory Nazianzen, Or. 39. St. John Damascenus, Lib. IV., De Fide, ch. x

(2) Acts of the Council of Trent, Sess. XIV., ch. ii.

time, the opinions of those who contend that the terrors which agitate the conscience and faith are the parts of Penance." (1)

"Contrition, which holds the first place amongst the aforesaid acts of the penitent, is a sorrow of mind, and a detestation for sin committed, with the purpose of not sinning for the future. This movement of contrition was at all times necessary for obtaining the pardon of sins; and, in one who has fallen after Baptism, it then at length prepares for the remission of sins, when it is united with confidence in the divine mercy, and with the desire of performing the other things which are required for rightly receiving this Sacrament. Wherefore the holy Synod declares that this contrition contains not only a cessation from sin, and the purpose and the beginning of a new life, but also a hatred of the old, agreeably to that saying: 'Cast away from you all your iniquities, wherein you have transgressed, and make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit' (Ezech. xviii. 31). And assuredly he who has considered those cries of the saints: 'To thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before thee' (Ps. l. 6); 'I have labored in my groaning, every night I will wash my bed' (Ps. vi. 7); 'I will recount to thee all my years, in the bitterness of my soul' (Is. xxxviii. 15), and others of this kind, will easily understand that they flowed from a certain vehement hatred of their past life, and from an exceeding detestation of sins. The Synod teaches, moreover, that, although it sometimes happens that this contrition is perfect through charity, and reconciles man with God before this Sacrament be actually received, the said reconciliation, nevertheless, is not to be ascribed to that contrition, independently of the desire of the Sacrament, which is included therein. And as to that imperfect contrition, which is called attrition, because it is commonly conceived either from the consideration of the turpitude of sin, or from the fear of hell and of punishment, it declares that if, with the hope of pardon, it exclude the wish to sin, it not only does not make a man a hypocrite and a greater sinner, but that it is even a gift of God, and an impulse of the Holy Ghost—who does not, indeed, as yet dwell in the penitent, but only moves him, whereby the penitent, being

(1) *Ib.*, ch. iii.

assisted, prepares a way for himself unto justice. And although this (attrition) can not of itself, without the Sacrament of Penance, conduct the sinner to justification, yet does it dispose him to obtain the grace of God in the Sacrament of Penance. For smitten profitably with this fear, the Ninevites, at the preaching of Jonas, did fearful penance, and obtained mercy from the Lord. Wherefore, falsely do some calumniate Catholic writers, as if they had maintained that the Sacrament of Penance confers grace without any good motion on the part of those who receive it—a thing which the Church of God never taught or thought; and falsely, also, do they assert that contrition is extorted and forced—not free and voluntary.” (1)

“From the institution of the Sacrament of Penance, as already explained, the Universal Church has always understood that the entire confession of sins was also instituted by the Lord, and is, of divine right, necessary for all who have fallen after Baptism; because that our Lord Jesus Christ, when about to ascend from earth to heaven, left priests his own vicars, as presidents and judges, unto whom all the mortal crimes into which the faithful of Christ may have fallen should be carried, in order that, in accordance with the power of the keys, they may pronounce the sentence of forgiveness or retention of sins. For it is manifest that priests could not have exercised this judgment without knowledge of the cause; neither, indeed, could they have observed equity in enjoining punishments, if the said faithful should have declared their sins in general only, and not, rather specifically, and one by one. Whence it is gathered that all the mortal sins, of which, after a diligent examination of themselves, they are conscious, must needs be, by penitents, enumerated in confession, even though those sins be most hidden, and committed only against the last two precepts of the decalogue—sins which sometimes wound the soul more grievously, and more dangerous than those which are committed outwardly. For, venial sins, whereby we are not excluded from the grace of God, and into which we fall more frequently, although they be rightly and profitably, and without any presumption, declared in confession, as the cus-

tom of pious persons demonstrates, yet may they be omitted without guilt, and be expiated by many other remedies. But whereas all mortal sins, even those of thought, render men children of wrath (Eph. ii. 3), and enemies of God, it is necessary to seek also for the pardon of them all from God, with an open and modest confession. Wherefore, while the faithful of Christ are faithful to confess all the sins which occur to their memory, they, without doubt, lay them all bare before the mercy of God to be pardoned; whereas they who act otherwise, and knowingly keep back certain sins, such set nothing before the divine bounty to be forgiven through the priest; for, if the sick be ashamed to show his wound to the physician, his medical art cures not that which it knows not of. We gather, furthermore, that those circumstances which change the species of the sin are also to be explained in confession, because that, without them, the sins themselves are neither entirely set forth by the penitents, nor are they known clearly to the judges; and it can not be that they can estimate rightly the grievousness of the crimes, and impose on the penitents the punishment which ought to be inflicted on account of them. Whence, it is unreasonable to teach that these circumstances have been invented by idle men; or that one circumstance only is to be confessed, to wit, that one has sinned against a brother. But is also impious to assert that confession, enjoined to be made in this manner, is impossible, or to call it a slaughter-house of consciences; for it is certain that, in the Church, nothing else is required of penitents, but that, after each has examined himself diligently, and searched all the folds and recesses of his conscience, he confess those sins by which he shall remember that he has mortally offended his Lord and God: whilst the other sins, which do not occur to him after diligent thought, are understood to be included as a whole, in that same confession; for which sins we confidently say, with the prophet: 'From my secret sins cleanse me, O Lord' (Ps. xviii. 13). Now, the very difficulty of a confession like this, and the shame of making known one's sins, might indeed seem a grievous thing, were it not alleviated by the many and great advantages and consolations which are most assuredly bestowed by absolution

upon all who worthily approach to this Sacrament. For the rest as to the manner of confessing secretly to a priest alone, although Christ has not forbidden that a priest may—in punishment of his sins, and for his own humiliation, as well for an example to others as for the edification of the Church that has been scandalized—confess his sins publicly, nevertheless this is not commanded by a divine precept; neither would it be very prudent to enjoin, by any human law, that sins, especially such as are secret, should be made known by a public confession. Wherefore, whereas the secret sacramental confession which was in use from the beginning in holy Church, and is still also in use, has always been commended by the most holy and the most ancient Fathers, with a great and unanimous consent, the vain calumny of those is manifestly refuted, who are not ashamed to teach that confession is alien from the divine command, and is a human invention, and that it took its rise from the Fathers assembled in the Council of Lateran; for the Church did not, through the Council of Lateran, ordain that the faithful of Christ should confess—a thing which it knew to be necessary, and to be instituted of divine right—but that the precept of confession should be complied with at least once a year, by all and each, when they have attained to years of discretion. Whence, throughout the whole Church, the salutary custom is, to the great benefit of the souls of the faithful, now observed, of confessing at that most sacred and most acceptable time of Lent—a custom which this holy Synod most highly approves of and embraces, as pious and worthy of being retained.”

“But, as regards the minister of this Sacrament, the holy Synod declares all these doctrines to be false and utterly alien from the truth of the Gospel, which perniciously extend the ministry of the keys to any others soever besides bishops and priests; imagining, contrary to the institution of this Sacrament, that those words of our Lord, ‘Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven’ (Matt. xviii. 18), and, ‘Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained’ (John xx. 23), were in such wise

addressed to all the faithful of Christ, indifferently and indiscriminately, as that every one has the power of forgiving sins—public sins, to wit, by rebuke, provided he that is rebuked shall acquiesce; and secret sins, by a voluntary confession made to any individual whatsoever. It also teaches that even priests who are in mortal sin, exercise, through the virtue of the Holy Ghost which was bestowed in ordination, the office of forgiving sins, as the ministers of Christ; and that the sentiment of those is erroneous who contend that this power exists not in bad priests. But, although the absolution of the priest is the dispensation of another's bounty, yet it is not a bare ministry only, whether of announcing the Gospel, or of declaring that sins are forgiven, but is after the manner of a judicial act, whereby sentence is pronounced by the priest as by a judge; and therefore the penitent ought not so to confide in his own personal faith, as to think that—even though there be no contrition on his part, or no intention on the part of the priest of acting seriously and absolving truly—he is, nevertheless, truly and in God's sight absolved, on account of his faith alone. For neither would faith without penance bestow any remission of sins, nor would he be otherwise than most careless of his own salvation, who, knowing that a priest but absolved him in jest, should not carefully seek for another who would act in earnest."

"Finally, as regards satisfaction—which, as it is, of all the parts of Penance, that which has been at all times recommended to the Christian people by our fathers, so it is the one especially which, in our age, is, under the loftiest pretext of piety, impugned by those who have 'an appearance of godliness, but have denied the power thereof' (2 Tim. iii. 5)—the holy Synod declares that it is wholly false and alien from the word of God, that the guilt is never forgiven by the Lord without the whole punishment also being therewith pardoned; for clear and illustrious examples are found in the Sacred Writings, whereby, besides by divine tradition, this error is refuted in the plainest manner possible. And, truly, the nature of divine justice seems to demand that they who, through ignorance, have sinned before Baptism, be received into grace in one manner; and in another, those who, after having

been freed from the servitude of sin and of the devil, and after having received the gift of the Holy Ghost, have not feared knowing, 'to violate the temple of God' (1 Cor. iii. 17), and 'to grieve the Holy Spirit' (Ephes. iv. 30). And it be seems the divine clemency, that sins be not in such wise pardoned us, without any satisfaction, as that, taking occasion therefrom, thinking sins less grievous, we, offering, as it were, an insult and an 'outrage to the Holy Ghost' (Heb. x. 29), should fall into more grievous sins, 'treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath' (Rom. ii. 4). For, doubtless, these satisfactory punishments greatly recall from sin, and check, as it were, with a bridle, and make penitents more cautious and watchful for the future. They are also remedies for the remains of sin, and, by acts of the opposite virtues, they remove the habits acquired by evil living. Neither, indeed, was there ever in the Church of God any way accounted surer to turn aside the impending chastisement of the Lord than that men should, with true sorrow of mind, practice these works of penitence. Add to these things that, whilst we thus, by making satisfaction, suffer for our sins, we are made conformable to Jesus Christ, who satisfied for our sins, from whom all our sufficiency is (2 Cor. iii. 5); having also, thereby, a most sure pledge that 'If we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him' (Rom. viii. 17). But neither is this satisfaction which we discharge for our sins so our own as not to be through Jesus Christ; for we, who can do nothing of ourselves, as of ourselves, can do all things, He co-operating who strengthens us. Thus, man has not wherein to glory, but all our glorying is in Christ, in whom we live, in whom we merit, in whom we satisfy, 'bringing forth fruits worthy of penance' (Matt. iii. 8), which from Him have their efficacy, by Him are offered to the Father, and through Him are accepted by the Father. Therefore the priests of the Lord ought, as far as the Spirit and prudence shall suggest, to enjoin salutary and suitable satisfaction, according to the quality of the crimes and the ability of the penitent, lest, if haply they connive at sins, and deal too indulgently with penitents, by enjoining certain very light works for very grievous crimes, they be made partakers of other men's sins. But let them have in

view that the satisfaction which they impose be not only for the preservation of a new life and a medicine of infirmity, but also for the avenging and punishment of past sins; for the ancient Fathers likewise both believe and teach that the keys of the priests were given not to loose only, but also to bind; but not, therefore, did they imagine that the Sacrament of Penance is a tribunal of wrath or of punishments, even as no Catholic ever thought that, by this kind of satisfaction on our part, the efficacy of the merit and of the satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ is either obscured or in any way lessened, which, when the innovators seek to understand, they in such wise maintain a new life to be the best penance, as to take away the entire efficacy and use of satisfaction." (1)

"The Synod teaches, furthermore, that so great is the liberality of the divine munificence, that we are able, through Jesus Christ, to make satisfaction to God the Father, not only by punishments voluntarily undertaken of ourselves for the punishment of sin, or by those imposed at the discretion of the priest, according to the measure of our delinquency, but also, which is a very great proof of love, by the temporal scourges inflicted of God, and borne patiently by us." (2)

"The Sacrament of Penance is the sole means through which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven; but, in case of necessity, this Sacrament may, like Baptism, be supplied by the earnest desire of the sinner to receive it, accompanied by perfect contrition. The fixed resolution to receive these Sacraments produces their effects on those who can not otherwise receive them, so that it is still through those Sacraments that sins are forgiven." (3)

Such has been the perpetual tradition of the Church.

Three conditions are necessary on the part of the penitent to receive the effects of this Sacrament, namely, contrition of heart, confession of mouth, and satisfaction of works. Contrition, literally understood, means the breaking into small parts of some harder substance, and is here used metaphorically, to signify that our hearts, hardened by pride, are subdued and reduced by

(1) Council of Trent, Acts and Dec. Sess. XIV., ch. viii.

(2) *Ib.*, ch. ix.

(3) *Ib.*, Sess. VI., ch. xiv.

penance. To excite contrition and make confession requires a knowledge of the state of our soul before God. This knowledge can result only from a careful examination of our conscience, and, as human frailty too often blinds us to the real enormity of our transgressions, we need a supernatural light. Prayer, earnest and humble, for light to see clearly the offenses we have committed, is therefore the first step; and then, when we have examined carefully our life by the commandments of God and His Church, and all the duties that our state of life imposes, we must again have recourse to prayer. It is not enough to see our sins; we need to excite contrition for them. This is a special grace of God, and must be earnestly sought. On it the whole will depend. This contrition is a sorrow of the soul for sins committed, a detestation of them, and a resolution to sin no more. This sorrow must be interior, proceeding from the bottom of the soul and not from the lips. It must be supernatural, excited by faith and by the motion of the Holy Spirit—not the result of any merely natural motive, such as the shame, punishment, or loss it may bring upon a man in this life. It must be grief for sin, because it is offensive to God, and deprives us of heaven and condemns to hell. Our sorrow must be sovereign; we must be more troubled for having offended God than we would be for the loss of what is most dear to us in this world; we must, influenced by this sorrow, prefer God to all things, and be disposed to sacrifice all, even life itself, rather than offend Him. It must be universal, extending to all our sins—not retaining an attachment to any.

In fine, it ought to be effectual and constant, such as may show a change and amendment of life. A surprise, a strong and violent temptation, together with human frailty, may possibly overcome a penitent sinner, and change his will and affections, which before were sincere; but if from confession to confession he relapses into the same mortal sins, scarce ever resisting his temptations or avoiding the occasions of his sins, he has great reason to fear that he was not before truly penitent.

Perfect contrition is a sorrow for sin, proceeding solely from charity, by which we love God above all things. It reconciles man to God, in virtue of his desire to receive the Sacrament of

Penance, even before he has received it. Attrition is a sorrow for sin, based on the consideration of its deformity, the evils it inflicts, and the punishment it entails. It is excited by the Holy Ghost, who, however, does not yet inhabit our hearts.

When the Christian has, by prayer, sought light from on high and, to the best of his ability, examined his conscience, and is prepared to confess the number and character of his mortal sins and has obtained by prayer and meditation contrition, or at least attrition, for his sins, he is ready to receive the Sacrament of Penance—to approach the tribunal where the priest sits as a judge.

The other Sacraments are administered with a certain pomp and solemnity of ritual. The Sacrament of Penance, which enters so largely into the plan of redemption, and is the great means of salvation, is almost strikingly devoid of all external rite. The priest, in his stole, is seated in the confessional. The penitent kneels beside him, and repeats the Confiteor, the general confession of the Church. Stating the period which his confession is to cover, the time when he last approached the Sacraments, he humbly, fully, lays open to the spiritual physician and judge the wounds of his soul—the offenses of which he arraigns himself, as he will one day be arraigned before the tribunal of God. Then from the lips of God's minister come the words of counsel—the questions, if needed, to test the depth and firmness of the contrition and amendment. The case is fully before the judge. He is now to exercise the discretionary power vested in him by Jesus Christ, the judge of the living and the dead: he is to bind or to loose. If the case is one that requires time to attest the sincerity of the contrition, or any act is to be done—if it be a case reserved to a higher tribunal, he binds it for the present. If, on the other hand, the penitent manifests the necessary dispositions, and no obstacle exists, the judge, in his tribunal, announces that he will loose him from his sins. He assigns the satisfactory works to be done—works which take the name of the Sacrament. Then the penitent renews his act of contrition. He is at the foot of the cross with Magdalene; the Precious Blood which ransomed a lost world is about to descend upon him; he is about to be washed white in the Blood of the Lamb. Grati-

tude, love, shame of past rebellions, all combine to give his sorrow the supernatural elements of perfect contrition. While from his heart rises the sincere act of heaven-inspired contrition, the judge proceeds to confer the Sacrament. After the "Misereatur" and "Indulgentiam," the concluding parts of the Confiteor, he says: "May our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee; and I, by His authority, absolve thee from every bond of excommunication and interdict so far as I can, and thou needest. Then I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

"May the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints, whatsoever good thou mayest have done or evil undergone, 'avail thee for the remission of sins, increase of grace, and reward of eternal life. Amen."

Then the penitent retires. The power of remitting sin, given by our Lord to His apostles as founders of the Church, has been exercised. The weight of sin has been lifted off. The ordinances required by Christ's institution for partaking in the fruits of His precious Blood have been accomplished, so far as human frailty permits. Why is it not sufficient to confess to God alone, and pronounce yourself your own absolution? Because God has not so instituted it. He is the Lord. He gives His graces and favors on His own conditions, and it is for us to accept them with gratitude and love. Naaman rebelled at the ceremony required for his cure of leprosy. Were not the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Jordan? Yet God had connected his cure with his bathing in Jordan; and for us to be cleansed from the leprosy of sin He has instituted the Sacrament of Penance. Pride may rebel, but reason counsels obedience. Sin, like leprosy, is a terrible burden that makes life insupportable, and no humiliation can be too great a price for the cure.

The satisfaction to be made to God for our sins, the penance imposed by the confessor, is enjoined that Christians may do something to satisfy God for their sins; for the satisfaction of Christ does not relieve us from the obligation of penitential works, nor does it render our satisfaction useless or unnecessary.

It is not enough that Christ has satisfied: His satisfaction must be applied to our souls.

All antiquity attests that the Church, from the earliest period, imposed penance, public or private, as the sins were public or secret. Of the public penitents, there were four classes: the Weepers, who were not allowed to enter the church, but knelt at the door, begging the prayers of the faithful; the Listeners, who were allowed to enter in order to hear the instructions given to the faithful; the Prostrates, who were allowed to hear the Mass as far as the Gospel, when they prostrated themselves, and, after prayers were recited over them, departed, as unworthy to be present at the Canon; the Assisters, who were absolved, but had not yet completed their prescribed penance and been admitted to Communion again.

Where our neighbor's goods or good name has been taken, restitution is necessary, before the guilt is forgiven. It is more easy to restore the property unjustly acquired; but to restore a good name is almost impossible. Yet the penitent must do what he can to restore the good name he has tarnished.

Connected with the doctrine of satisfaction is that of indulgence. An indulgence is not remission of sins—that is to be sought in the tribunal of Penance; it is not the forgiveness of future sins—no such power has ever been claimed by the Church, or dreamed of. The very idea is repugnant to Scripture, to reason. An indulgence is the remission of the whole or part of the temporal punishment which is due to the justice of God after the sin and eternal punishment are remitted. It always presupposes that the sin and eternal punishment are remitted. But, besides the eternal punishment, there is a temporal punishment attached to sin and this remains even when the sin is forgiven. Of this we have many examples. Our Lord, by His death on the cross, redeemed the world; but death, and the other temporal punishments of Adam's sin, remain. Even when this redemption is, by the Sacrament of Baptism, brought to the individual soul, and all sin washed away, still the baptized remains subject to death, sickness, concupiscence. God, at the intercession of Moses, pardoned the children of Israel for their sin in adoring the golden calf, yet

in punishment of that sin, he condemned them to wander for forty years in the wilderness. When David repented of his grievous sins, God pardoned him, but condemned him, in punishment and satisfaction, to endure the most humiliating family afflictions.

Nor is this temporal punishment limited to this life. Where it is not fully undergone in life, the soul in purgatory suffers till God's justice is satisfied. This has been at all times the doctrine of the Jews, who hold it to this day. Indeed, they believe that only four persons ever died so pure as to go direct to Abraham's bosom, or the limbo of the Fathers. The Christian Church, from the beginning, has believed and taught the same, and Catholic and Oriental Christians alike pray for the dead. It was only in the deep ignorance of the fifteenth century that men were found to deny this acknowledged truth, and the practices it entails. Rejected at first through ignorance, it is still rejected through pride.

The Jewish practice of prayer for the dead, still in use among them, is alluded to in the second book of Machabees, where some of the Jewish soldiers, who fell in battle, were found to have kept some idolatrous objects captured from the enemy. To obtain their release from punishment, Judas sent money to Jerusalem to have sacrifices offered, and the sacred penman adds: "It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" (2 Mac. xii. 43). St. Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy (i. 16, 18), prays for Onesiphorus, "that the Lord grant he may find mercy on that day;" and that that disciple was dead is evident from the last chapter, where St. Paul salutes the family, omitting mention of its head. St. Matthew (xii. 32) and St. Paul (1 Cor. iii. 15) show that sins are forgiven in the world to come through purging by fire. By the first epistle of St. Peter (iii. 19), we see that our Saviour, after His death, preached to spirits that were in prison on account of their incredulity in the days of Noe, "the preacher of justice" (2 Peter ii. 5), not evidently the just in Abraham's bosom, or the reprobate in hell, whose sins drew down the chastisement of the deluge, but those who led good lives, but did not believe the

preaching of Noe, and regarded his menaces with incredulity. So, too, the creatures under the earth, mentioned in the Apocalypse (v. 13) as blessing the Lamb, are certainly not the damned and can only be the souls in Purgatory.

The doctrine of Purgatory, as taught by the Church, is that after this life there is a middle state of suffering, to which the souls of those are condemned for a time, who, though dying in the state of grace and in friendship with God, yet have not fully satisfied the Divine justice for the debt of temporal punishment due for their smaller sins, or for their more grievous sins, whose guilt has been pardoned in the Sacrament of Penance, or who die under the guilt of smaller sins or imperfections.

With this doctrine of the Church in regard to the temporal punishment of sin understood, it is easy to explain indulgences, which have reference, as the old canonical penance had, to this temporal punishment. That the power of the Church extends to it is clear from the widely comprehensive promise in Matt. xviii. 18 and xix. 19: "Whatsoever you shall bind," etc.

The pardon granted by St. Paul to the Corinthian was a remission of temporal punishment (2 Cor. ii). At the intercession of martyrs, on their way to execution, bishops frequently granted an indulgence to penitents, as Tertullian (*Ad Martyr.*, c. I.), and Cyprian (*Ep.* 9, 10, 13) assure us. The indulgences, in their present form, refer to the canonical penances of the early Church. An indulgence of seven years, one year, etc., is a remission of that length of canonical penance in the primitive usage, and a remission of so much temporal punishment as corresponds thereto.

A plenary indulgence is a complete remission of canonical penance. Of the plenary indulgences, the greatest is the Jubilee, granted by the Pope every twenty-five years to all who visit the four principal churches of Rome. It was at first granted every century, then every fifty years, but Pope Paul II. reduced it to twenty-five years. It is called a Jubilee in memory of the holy year among the Jews (*Levit.* xxv.). To enable the faithful in all parts of the world to benefit by the bounty of the Church, the indulgence can be gained in all dioceses by visits to churches appointed by the bishop, in conformity with the bull issued by the Pope.

Such is the Sacrament of Penance. Speaking of it, Faber says: "What is absolution? It is the authentic dripping of the Precious Blood upon the head of the repentant sinner. It is God's patience grown so patient as to be magnificent. It is almost, but not quite, the limit of the outstretching of the eternal arms of mercy. In it human acts reach to one of their highest heights. They are lifted up to merit salvation by the merits of the Precious Blood. Human sorrow is consecrated and made divine by the touch and the anointing of the sorrow of Jesus; and that unction was only to touch us with the flowing of His Blood from His gracious wounds. Without shedding of Blood there was to be no remission. Millions of souls are at large in heaven this day, who without absolution would have been in hell. . . . Hearts have to be softened, habits weakened, dispositions changed, occasions deserted, new tastes infused, entanglements untied. The Precious Blood has to put forth more of its strength here than in Baptism; because it has to overcome more inveteracy and resistance."

THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION.

ALTHOUGH the enemy of mankind always goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; yet he redoubles all his force and all his art when we come to our last moments, knowing that if he can gain us then, we will be his forever, but if he loses us then, he loses us forever. Hence St. Cyril of Alexandria writes: "What terror, what trembling, what a combat attends a soul going out of the body! Since in that dreadful hour a multitude of wicked spirits will then be present to you, laying open to you all the sins you have committed in your life." St. Hilarion, when he came to die, was oppressed with such fear and horror of death that, to encourage his soul, he said: "Go forth, my soul, why dost thou fear? Thou hast now served the Lord almost these seventy years, and art thou afraid to die?" Now, if the saints themselves have been thus terrified at the hour of death what

may sinners expect? But, in the sight of the tomb, silent vestibule of another world, Christianity displays all its sublimity. If most of the ancient religions consecrated the ashes of the dead none ever thought of preparing the soul for that unknown country from whose bourne no traveler returns.

“Come and witness the most interesting spectacle that earth can exhibit! Come and see the faithful citizen expire! He has ceased to be a citizen of this world; he no longer belongs to his native country; all ties between him and society are broken. For him the measures of time have closed, and he has already begun to date from the great era of eternity. A priest, seated by his dying couch, administers consolation. This minister of God cheers the expiring Christian with the bright prospect of immortality, and that sublime scene, which all antiquity exhibited but once, in the last moments of its most eminent philosopher, is daily renewed on the humble pallet of the humblest Christian who passes away from earth.

“The decisive moment has come. A Sacrament opened to this just man the gates of the world; a Sacrament is about to close them. Religion rocked him in the cradle of life, and now her sweet songs and maternal hand will lull him to sleep in the cradle of death. She prepares the baptism of this second birth but, mark! she employs no water; she anoints him with oil, emblem of celestial incorruptibility. The liberating Sacrament gradually loosens the Christian’s bonds; his soul, nearly disenthralled from the body, is almost visible in his countenance. His ears catch, even now, the strains of the seraphim; he is already struggling to speed his flight to those heavenly regions where Hope, the daughter of Virtue and of Death, invites him. Meanwhile, the Angel of Peace, descending toward the just man, touches his weary eyes with her golden wand, and sweetly closes them to the light of this world. He expires; yet, long after he is no more, his friends keep silent watch beside his couch, under the impression that he but slumbers, so gently did this Christian pass away.”(1)

The Jewish Church guardian of revealed truth, surrounded

the death-bed of her children with prayers and rites which are retained to this day, and in which we behold the origin of many of the forms of prayer for the dying used by the Church; but Jesus, who is called the Christ, or the Anointed, instituted in the Church, His Spouse, a Sacrament of Unction, the last of those which the Christian was to receive, to apply, by a new invention of His love, the merits of His Precious Blood to the soul in its last struggle with the enemies of its salvation, and enable it to triumph, and go forth to receive its crown.

The Council of Trent thus defines the Catholic doctrine in regard to this Sacrament: "It hath also seemed good to this holy Synod to subjoin the following, on the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which, by the Fathers, was regarded as being the completion, not only of penance, but also of the whole Christian life, which ought to be a perpetual penance. First, therefore, as regards its institution, it declares and teaches that our most gracious Redeemer—who would have His servants, at all times, provided with salutary remedies against all the weapons of all their enemies—as, in the other Sacraments, He prepared the greatest aids whereby, during life, Christians may preserve themselves whole, from every more grievous spiritual evil, so did He guard the close of life by the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, as with a most firm defense. For though our adversary seeks and seizes opportunities, all our life long, to be able in any way to devour our souls, yet is there no time wherein he strains more vehemently all the powers of his craft to ruin us utterly, and, if he can possibly, to make us fall even from trust in the mercy of God, than when he perceives the end of our life to be at hand.

"Now, this Sacred Unction of the sick was instituted by Christ our Lord, as truly and properly a Sacrament of the New Law, insinuated indeed in Mark, but recommended and promulgated to the faithful by James the Apostle, and brother of our Lord. 'Is any man,' he saith, 'sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of our Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him' (St. James v. 14, 15)

in which words, as the Church has learned from apostolical tradition, received from hand to hand, he teaches the matter, the form, the proper minister, and the effect of this salutary Sacrament. For the Church has understood the matter thereof to be oil blessed by a bishop. For the Unction very aptly represents the grace of the Holy Ghost, with which the soul of the sick person is invisibly anointed; and, furthermore, that those words: 'By this Unction,' etc., are the form. (1)

"Moreover, the thing signified, and the effects of this Sacrament, are explained in those words: 'And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.' For the thing here signified is the grace of the Holy Ghost, whose anointing cleanses away sins, if there be any still to be expiated, as also the remains of sins; and raises up and strengthens the soul of the sick person, by exciting in him a great confidence in the divine mercy; whereby the sick, being supported, bears more easily the inconveniences and pains of his sickness, and more readily resists the temptations of the devil who lies in wait for his heel (Gen. iii. 15); and, at times, attains bodily health, when expedient for the welfare of his soul. (2)

"And now, as to prescribing who ought to receive, and who to administer this Sacrament, this also was not obscurely delivered in the words above cited. For it is there also shown, that the proper ministers of this Sacrament are the presbyters of the Church; by which name are to be understood, in that place, not the elders by age, or the foremost in dignity amongst the people, but either bishops, or priests by bishops rightly ordained, by the imposition of the hands of the priesthood (I Tim. iv. 14). It is also declared that this Unction is to be applied to the sick, but to those especially who lie in such danger as to seem to be about to depart this life; whence also it is called the Sacrament of the departing. And if the sick should, after receiving this Unction recover, they may again be aided by the succor of this Sacrament, when they fall into another like danger of death. Wherefore,

(1) Acts of the Council of Trent. Sess. XIV., of Extreme Unction, ch. i.

(2) Acts of the Council of Trent. Sess. XIV., of Extreme Unction, ch. ii.

they are on no account to be hearkened to, who, against so manifest and so clear a sentence of the apostle James, teach either that this Unction is a human figment, or is a rite received from the Fathers, which neither has a command from God, nor a promise of grace; nor those who assert that it has already ceased, as though it were only to be referred to the grace of healing in the Primitive Church; nor those who say that the rite and usage which the holy Roman Church observes in the administration of this Sacrament is repugnant to the sentiment of the apostle James, and that it is therefore to be changed into some other; nor, finally, those who affirm that this Extreme Unction may, without sin, be contemned by the faithful—for all those things are most manifestly at variance with the perspicuous words of so great an apostle. Neither, assuredly, does the Roman Church, the mother and mistress of all other churches observe aught in administering this Unction—as regards those things which constitute the substance of this Sacrament—but what blessed James has prescribed. Nor, indeed, can there be contempt of so great a Sacrament, without a heinous sin and an injury to the Holy Ghost himself.” (1)

The matter of this Sacrament consists of oil of olives, consecrated by episcopal hands. This matter is significative of the efficacy of this Sacrament. Oil is very efficacious in soothing bodily pain, and this Sacrament soothes and alleviates the pain and anguish of the soul. Oil also contributes to restore health and spirits; serves to give light, and refreshes fatigue; these effects are expressive of those produced through the Divine power on the sick, by this Sacrament.

When the priest enters the sick-room, he says: “Peace be to this house;” to which the faithful answer: “and to all who dwell therein.” Then placing the holy oil on the table, the priest, vested in a surplice and violet stole, offers the sick man a crucifix to kiss, and then sprinkles the chamber and by-standers with holy water. Then he begins. “Our help is in the name of the Lord.” Response: “Who made heaven and earth.” “The Lord be with you.” “And with your spirit.” Then follows a prayer, asking

everlasting felicity, divine prosperity, serene gladness, fruitful charity, perpetual health, and all other blessings on the house, and all that dwell therein. Before proceeding to confer the Sacrament, he admonishes the by-standers to pray for the sick person, and while they are reciting some appropriate prayer, he says: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, may all the power of the devil be extinguished in thee by the imposition of our hands, and by the invocation of all the holy angels, archangels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the saints. Amen." Then, dipping his thumb in the holy oil, he anoints the sick man, in the form of a cross, on the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, and feet, saying at each anointing an appropriate prayer. That at the anointing of the eyes is as follows: "Through the holy Unction, and through the most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by seeing." It varies in the others by hearing, smelling, taste, and speech, touch and walking.

Then, after the Kyrie eleison, and Our Father, and some versicles with their responses, he prays as follows: "Lord God Almighty, who hast spoken by Thine apostle James, saying, 'Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him,' cure, we beseech Thee, O our Redeemer, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the languors of this sick man; heal his wounds, and forgive his sins; drive out from him all pains of body and mind, and mercifully restore to him full health, inwardly and outwardly, that, being recovered by the help of Thy mercy, he may return to his former duties." "Look down, O Lord, we beseech Thee, upon Thy servant, fainting in the infirmity of his body, and refresh the soul which Thou hast created, that, being amended by chastisements, he may feel himself saved by Thy medicine." "O holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God, who, by pouring the grace of Thy blessing upon sick bodies, dost preserve by Thy manifold goodness the work of Thy hands, graciously draw near at the invocation of Thy name, that

delivering Thy servant from sickness, and bestowing health upon him, Thou mayest raise him up by Thy right hand, strengthen him by Thy might, defend him by Thy power, and restore him to Thy holy Church, with all desired prosperity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen." He then exhorts the sick man to the virtues most necessary in his state—to faith and hope.

"As baptism can justify the child whose reason has not dawned, so Extreme Unction can deal with the relics of sin in a sinner who lies insensible."

"Extreme Unction," says Faber, "like the oil of the Grecian wrestlers, anoints us for our mortal struggle. Whatever relics of sin there may be in us, the powers of darkness will fasten upon them. But the grace of this Sacrament searches them out, with a mysterious penetration, and puts them to a supernatural death. The best name for its grace is the grace of health; and so, if God does not will that it should impart health to our bodies, it turns its exotic medicinal virtues upon the soul. Other Sacraments liken our lives to the life of Jesus. This likens our deaths to the death of Jesus. It diffuses itself over our souls, strewn with the work of a whole life, and gathers up the fragments which other Sacraments have left untouched. It cleanses them with a last cleansing. It arranges them with neatness and order for the coming of our Lord. It puts them in their right posture and attitude for being most safely judged. Must not its graces be very peculiar, and yet, also, very magnificent? Throughout the world there is a whole population dying daily. A section of the world is always on its death-bed and in its agony. How prodigal, then, must the Precious Blood be of its magnificent peculiarities in this pathetic Sacrament!"

COMMENDATION OF THE DEPARTING SOUL.

The Church does not, even with the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and the Holy Communion as Viaticum, cease her motherly care for her dying children. When the last supreme moment approaches, she comes again to aid him in his agony with one of her most solemn and consoling rites, the Commenda-

tion of the Departing Soul—not a new Sacrament, indeed, but one of her most impressive Sacramentals.

The priest, in his surplice and purple stole, enters with the salutation: "Peace to this house, and all who dwell therein." Then he sprinkles the sick man, his beds, and those around, with holy water, saying the usual Asperges. He next gives a crucifix to the dying Christian to kiss, arousing in him the hope of eternal salvation, and keeps that holy representation before him, that, looking upon it, his faith may not fail. Then a candle is lighted, and the priest, kneeling, recites the short Litany of the Dying, calling upon the Blessed Virgin; the holy angels and archangels, the choir of the just; the holy patriarchs and prophets; the apostles and evangelists; the martyrs, bishops, confessors, monks, and hermits; the holy virgins and widows—all the saints of God, to pray and intercede for him who is now in the last struggle. "Be merciful unto him, spare him, O Lord," he prays; and he begs God to deliver him from wrath, from the danger of death, from an evil death, from the pains of hell, and the power of the devil, appealing to our Lord by His incarnation, passion, and death.

When the person enters into his agony, the priest utters this prayer, one of the most thrilling in the whole service, where the minister of God, standing, as it were, on the verge of this world and the next, bids the creature of God, whom the Church has guided through life, cross the boundary:

"Depart, Christian soul, out of this world, in the name of God, the Father Almighty, who created thee: in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, who suffered for thee: in the name of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified thee; in the name of the angels, archangels, thrones and dominations, cherubim and seraphim: in the name of the patriarchs and prophets, of the holy apostles and evangelists, of the holy martyrs and confessors, of the holy monks and hermits, of the holy virgins, and of all the saints of God. Let thy place be this day in peace, and thy abode in holy Sion, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

"God of mercy, God of goodness! O God, who, according to the multitude of Thy mercies, forgivest the sins of such as repent

and graciously remittest the guilt of their past offenses, mercifully regard this thy servant N., and grant him a full discharge from all his sins, who most earnestly begs it of Thee. Remove, O merciful Father whatever is corrupt in him through human frailty, or by the snares of the enemy; make him a true member of the Church, and let him partake of the fruit of Thy redemption. Have compassion, Lord, on his tears, and admit him to the reconciliation with Thee, who has no hope but in Thee, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

"I recommend thee, dear brother, to Almighty God, and leave thee to His mercy, whose creature thou art; that, having paid the common debt, by surrendering thy soul, thou mayest return to thy Maker, who formed thee out of the earth."

Then all the blessed are invited to welcome him, and God is implored to deliver him from hell, as He has so often delivered His servants from trials and afflictions. These sentiments are in a manner repeated in the prayer:

"We commend to Thee, O Lord, the soul of this Thy servant, and beseech Thee, Jesus Christ, Redeemer of the world, that as in mercy to him Thou becamest man, so now Thou wouldst vouchsafe to admit him into the number of the blessed. Remember, O Lord, he is Thy creature, not made by strange gods, but by Thee, the only true and living God; for there is no other God but Thee, none that can work Thy wonders. Let his soul find comfort in Thy sight, and remember not his former sins, nor any of those excesses which he has fallen into, through the violence of passion and corruption. For although he has sinned, he hath retained a true faith in Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; he has had zeal for Thy honor, and faithfully adored Thee, his God and Creator of all things. Remember not, O Lord, we beseech Thee, the sins and ignorance of his youth; but, according to Thy great mercy, be mindful of him in Thy eternal glory. Let the heavens be open to him, and the angels rejoice with him. Receive, O Lord, Thy servant into Thy kingdom. Let the archangel, St. Michael, the chief of the heavenly host, conduct him. Let the holy angels of God meet him, and bring him into the city of the heavenly Jerusalem. May blessed Peter, the apostle

to whom were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, receive him. May holy Paul, the apostle, who was a vessel of election, help him. May St. John, the beloved disciple, to whom God revealed the secrets of heaven, intercede for him. May all the holy apostles, to whom was given the power of binding and loosing, pray for him. May all the saints and elect of God, who in this world have suffered torments for the name of Christ, pray for him. That, being delivered from this body of corruption, he may be admitted into the kingdom of heaven, through the assistance and merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end."

As the last moment approaches, all present should be the more instant in prayer. And the dying Christian should pronounce, or, if his strength will not permit, the priest should pronounce for him, aloud and clearly: "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" that that name, the only name given to men whereby they shall be saved, may be the last he hears and utters. Other suitable thoughts should be suggested, in such words as these: "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." "O Lord Jesus Christ, receive my soul." "Holy Mary, pray for me." "Mary, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, protect me from the enemy, and receive me in the hour of death."

When, amid these holy thoughts, the soul has left the body lifeless, pale, and cold, the prayers of the Church follow it before the dread tribunal. "Meet him, ye saints of God; meet him, ye angels of the Lord, receiving his soul, offering it in the sight of the Most High. May Christ, who called thee, receive thee, and may angels lead thee to Abraham's bosom. Eternal rest give unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him;" and the ejaculatory prayers close with this: "We commend to Thee, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, that, dead to the world, he may live to Thee; and do Thou cleanse away by the pardon of Thy most merciful pity, the sins he has committed through the frailty of human conversation."

Such is the death-bed of the Catholic, and such the means which the Church adopts to rob it of its terrors, to fill him with contrition and holy hope.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

THE MINISTERS AND MINISTRY OF THE SACRAMENTS—THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS.

FROM an attentive consideration of the nature of the other Sacraments, we shall find little difficulty in perceiving that so dependent are they all on that of Orders, that without its intervention some could not exist, or be administered, whilst others should be stripped of the religious rites and solemn ceremonies, and of that exterior respect which should accompany their administration. Let us for a moment dwell on the exalted dignity and transcendent excellence of this Sacrament. Priests and bishops are, as it were, the interpreters and heralds of God, commissioned in His name to teach mankind the law of God, and the precepts of a Christian life—they are the representatives of God upon earth. Impossible, therefore, to conceive a more exalted dignity or functions more sacred. Justly, therefore, are they called not only angels, but gods, holding, as they do, the place and power and authority of God on earth. But the priesthood, at all times an elevated office, transcends in the New Law all others in dignity. The power of consecrating and offering the body and blood of our Lord, and of remitting sins, with which the priesthood of the New Law is invested, is such as cannot be comprehended by the human mind, still less is it equalled by, or assimilated to, anything on earth. Again, as Christ was sent by the Father, the apostles and disciples by Christ, even so are priests invested with the same power, and sent for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and the edification of the body of Christ.

There must necessarily be in the Church a priesthood and a sacrifice. The sacrifice is the offering of the Lamb without spot. The priesthood was not to be, like that of old, limited to one family or even one nation. The covenant with Abraham narrowing down in lapse of time, by the exclusion of branch after branch in successive generations, till at last the sacerdotal powers vested in Aaron and his descendants, was, in the wider range of the New Covenant, again extended to all the nations of the earth—to all

the tribes and tongues and peoples. This incomparable dignity of handling the mysteries of the New Law was not, however, to be taken up at the caprice or fancy of any one. "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself," says St. Paul, "but he that is called by God as Aaron was." (1) The priesthood under the New Law was to be one of individual vocation. God chooses out His own from among men: it is not for men to select and, as it were, impose upon God those who are to minister at His altar. The powers flow down from Christ, as high-priest, to all in the various degrees. He said, pointedly, to His apostles: "You have not elected me, but I have selected you." (2)

In this Sacrament of Orders, as in all, and even more pre-eminently, is "Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day, and forever." St. Paul defines the royal and eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ in clear and distinct terms: "Having, therefore, a great high-priest, that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God: let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high-priest, who can not have compassion on our infirmities; but one tempted in all things such as we are, without sin. . . . For every high-priest taken from among men is ordained for men, in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on them that are ignorant, and that err: because he himself also is compassed with infirmity: and therefore he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself, that he might be made a high-priest: but he that said unto him: Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee." (3) As He saith also in another place: "Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech," (4) "who, in the days of his flesh with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to him that was able to save him from death, was heard for his reverence. And whereas he was indeed the Son of God, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and being consummated, he became, to all that obey him,

(1) Hebrews v. 4.

(3) Psalm ii. 7.

(2) St. John xv. 16.

(4) Psalm cix. 4.

the cause of eternal salvation, called by God a high-priest, according to the order of Melchisedech, of whom we have much to say, and hard to be intelligibly uttered." (1)

"But this, for that he continueth forever, hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby he is able also to save forever them that come to God by him: always living to make intercession for us. For it is fitting that we should have such a high-priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, who needed not daily, as the priests (of Aaron's line) to offer sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once in offering himself." (2) "We have such a high-priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord hath pitched and not man. For every high-priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that he also should have something to offer." (3)

Such were the words of St. Paul, arguing with the Jews to show that the Aaronic priesthood and sacrifices had accomplished the purpose for which they were created by divine institution, and explaining the high-priesthood of Jesus Christ, and through Him of the ministry and sacrifice to be offered under the law of grace.

The power conferred by Almighty God on His Church and her ministers is two-fold, namely, of Orders and Jurisdiction. The power of Orders has reference to the body of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, that of jurisdiction to His mystical body, the Church; for to this latter belong the government of His spiritual kingdom on earth, and the direction of the faithful in the way of salvation. In the power of Orders is included not only that of consecrating the Holy Eucharist, but also of preparing the soul for its worthy reception, and whatever else has reference to the Sacred Mysteries.

This power far transcends that which was given to those who under the law of nature exercised a special superintendence over sacred things. The age anterior to the written law must have had its priesthood, a priesthood invested with spiritual power;

(1) Hebrews iv. 14, 15; v. 1-11.

(2) Hebrews vii. 23-27.

(3) Hebrews viii. 1-3.

that it had a law cannot be questioned; and so intimately interwoven are these two things with one another, that take away one, you of necessity remove the other. As, then, prompted by the dictate of the instinctive feelings of his nature, man recognizes the worship of God as a duty, it follows as a necessary consequence that under every form of government, some persons must be constituted the official guardians of sacred things, the legitimate ministers of the divine worship; and of such persons the power might, in a certain sense, be called spiritual.

With this power the priesthood of the Old Law was also invested; but although superior in dignity to that exercised under the law of nature, it was far inferior to the spiritual power enjoyed under the Gospel dispensation. The power with which the Christian priesthood is clothed, is a heavenly power, raised above that of angels; it has its source, not in the Levitical priesthood, but in Christ the Lord, who was a priest, not according to Aaron, but according to the order of Melchisedech. He it is who, endowed with supreme authority to grant pardon and grace, has bequeathed this power to His Church, a power limited, however, in its extent, and attached to the Sacraments. To exercise this power, therefore, ministers are appointed and solemnly consecrated, and this solemn consecration is denominated "Ordination," or the "Sacrament of Orders."

To imagine that the mysteries of God were not committed for their dispensation to men selected, called by God as Aaron was, endowed with special graces of state by a sacramental outward rite, which would be at once an evidence to the people and a type of the grace conferred, is impossible.

Let us open the sacred record. That Jesus Christ called twelve men, whom He made princes of the Church of which He often spoke, all admit; that He gave a special name to one of these, and, calling him a rock, declared that on that rock He would build His Church, is recorded by inspired writers. (1) This direct vocation was preceded, on our Saviour's part, by a night of prayer; and with the dignity of apostles was conferred, not only power to preach and to teach, but also the gift of miracles, ex-

(1) Matt. iv. 18; x. 2; Mark iii. 13; Luke vi. 12; Matt. xvi. 18.

tending to the cure of diseases of all kinds and the power to expel evil spirits. (1) At the last supper He bestowed upon them the power to administer the Holy Eucharist, which He there instituted, saying to them, and not to the body of the disciples, "Do this for a commemoration of me."—"This do ye, as often as ye shall drink, for the commemoration of me." (2) Subsequent to His resurrection, after declaring that all power was given to Him in heaven and on earth, He breathed on them, and said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (3) Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

Here are all that characterize those sublime mysteries, the Sacraments. A power is conferred that God alone can bestow, and the miracles given as a proof of that unseen power bestowed, and the universality of the power bestowed on His Sacred Humanity by the Godhead is invoked as a preface to the institution of the fullness of the Sacrament of Order. He breathed on them; He gave the Chalice as outward signs; He gave the power to teach and to preach; power to baptize, to consecrate and administer His Sacred Body and Blood; power to forgive sins.

The Holy Council of Trent, in its twenty-third session, celebrated under Pope Pius IV., on the fifteenth day of July, 1563, uses this language, which distinctly embodies the doctrine of the Catholic Church in regard to the Sacrament of Order:

"Sacrifice and priesthood are, by the ordinance of God, in such wise conjoined, as that both have existed in every law. Whereas, therefore, in the New Testament, the Catholic Church has received, from the institution of Christ, the holy, visible sacrifice of the Eucharist, it must needs also be confessed, that there is, in that Church, a new, visible, and external priesthood, into which

(1) Matt. x. 1-8; Mark iii. 14; Luke vi. 13.

(2) Matt. xxvi. 26-29; Mark xiv. 22-25; Luke xxii. 17-20; 1 Cor. xxiii. 25.

(3) John xx. 22, 23; Matt. xxviii. 18-20.

the old has been translated. And the Sacred Scriptures show, and the tradition of the Catholic Church has always taught, that this priesthood was instituted by the same Lord, our Saviour and that, to the apostles, and their successors in the priesthood was the power delivered of consecrating, offering, and administering His Body and Blood, as also of forgiving and of retaining sins.

“And whereas the ministry of so holy a priesthood is a divine thing, to the end that it might be exercised in a more worthy manner, and with greater veneration, it was suitable that, in the most well-ordered settlement of the Church, there should be several and diverse orders of ministers, to minister to the priesthood by virtue of their office—orders so distributed as that those already marked with the clerical tonsure should ascend through the lesser to the greater orders. For the Sacred Scriptures make open mention, not only of priests, but also of deacons; and teach, in words the most weighty, what things are especially to be attended to in the Ordination thereof; and, from the very beginning of the Church, the names of the following orders, and the ministrations proper to each one of them, are known to have been in use, to wit: those of Subdeacon, Acolyth, Exorcist, Lector and Doorkeeper; though these were not of equal rank, for the subdeaconship is classed amongst the greater orders by the Fathers and Sacred Councils, wherein, also, we very often read of the other inferior orders.

“Whereas, by the testimony of Scripture, by Apostolic tradition, and the unanimous consent of the Fathers, it is clear that grace is conferred by sacred ordination, which is performed by words and outward signs, no one ought to doubt that Order is truly and properly one of the Seven Sacraments of Holy Church. For the Apostle says: ‘I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love, and of sobriety.’ (1)

“But, forasmuch as in the Sacrament of Order, so also in Baptism and Confirmation, a character is imprinted which can

neither be effaced nor taken away, the holy Synod, with reason condemns the opinion of those who assert that the priests of the New Testament have only a temporary power, and that those who have been once duly ordained can again become laymen, if they do not exercise the ministry of the Word of God. And if any one affirm that all Christians, indiscriminately, are priests of the New Testament, or that they are all mutually endowed with an equal spiritual power, he clearly does nothing but confound the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is 'as an army set in array;' (1) as if, contrary to the doctrine of Blessed Paul, 'all' were 'apostles, all prophets, all evangelists, all pastors, all doctors.' (2) Wherefore, the Holy Synod declares that, besides the other ecclesiastical degrees, bishops, who have succeeded to the place of the Apostles, principally belong to this hierarchical order; that they are 'placed,' as the same apostle says, 'by the Holy Ghost, to rule the Church of God;' (3) that they are superior to priests; administer the Sacrament of Confirmation; ordain the ministers of the Church; and that they can perform very many other things—over which functions others of an inferior order have no power. Furthermore, the sacred and holy Synod teaches that, in the ordination of bishops, priests, and of the other orders, neither the consent, nor vocation, nor authority, whether of the people, or of any civil power or magistrate whatsoever, is required in such wise that, without this, the ordination is invalid; yea, rather, doth it decree that all those who, being only called and instituted by the people, or by the civil power and magistrate, ascend to the exercise of these ministrations, and those who, of their own rashness, assume them to themselves, are not ministers of the Church, but are to be looked upon as 'thieves and robbers, who have not entered by the door.' (4) These are the things which it hath seemed good to the Sacred Synod to teach the faithful of Christ, in general terms, touching the Sacrament of Order."

Holy Order is a Sacrament which gives grace and power to perform the public functions connected with the worship of God and the salvation of souls. Every Sacrament has its outward

(1) Cant. vi. 3.

(3) Acts xx. 28.

(2) Ephes. vi. 11-12.

(4) John x. 1.

sign, and its inward grace, and its appointed minister. The minister of this Sacrament is a bishop. Only the apostles and the bishops, their successors, are recorded in the inspired books of the New Law as conferring this Sacrament. The constant tradition of the Catholic Church is marked by its repeated condemnations of those who called this point in question. The sensible sign is the prayer of the bishop and the imposition of his hands. St. Luke, in the Acts, and St. Paul, in his Epistles to Timothy, mention the imposition of the bishop's hands as the essential sign in the ordination of priests and deacons. (1) The apostle of the Gentiles, and the tradition of the Church in all ages, connect special graces with the prayers and imposition of hands by the bishop on the Christian levite.

The effects of this Sacrament transcend human thought and human words. "In conferring the priesthood, the crowning of Holy Order as a Sacrament, the Church comes forth in the plenitude of her greatness. What earthly power shall presume to vie with that which Saint John Chrysostom rates above the dignity of angels? The angels, indeed, see their Lord face to face, but to them is not given, as the priest, the control of His very Body. He vouchsafes, of His abundant condescension, to obey the bidding of His creatures; to descend at their word upon our altars; to contract Himself within the limits of space." By this Sacrament, too, man is invested with a power that seems a very attribute of omnipotence—the power of forgiving and retaining sin which Jesus Christ paused in an argument to prove, by a miracle that He possessed as man, and which, in the fullness of His power he confided to His apostles.

This tremendous dignity of the priesthood is not lightly conferred. The Church surrounds the approach to the Sacrament of Order by a host of precautions. She seems to hesitate, to examine, to pray, at every step of the long preparation. There must be a vocation from God. "We should always distrust a vocation which springs from our parents or ourselves, no matter how good our intentions may seem to be." (2) Of any motive like ambition, or avarice, we need not speak; the world itself would

(1) Acts vi. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 14, 22; 2 Tim. i. 6.

(2) Saint Gregory on Vocation.

condemn it. An enlightened spiritual guide, well instructed in the laws of the Church, having experience in the ways of God and full of prudent zeal, will best direct one who, believing himself called by God, seeks in prayer and humility to follow the divine will in his choice of a state. The vocation of the bishop, guided by special graces for the maintenance of the sacerdotal order, will rarely fail to be, to the pure of heart and mind, a clear and unmistakable guide. The urgings of parents to enter on the service are always liable to suspicion, and have often led to deplorable results; for though any parent may desire, with a holy desire, to behold his son called to a state so intimately connected with the worship, he is not an unbiased judge, and may be opposing the will of God.

A real vocation will generally be shown by a detachment from the world, its vanities, its all-absorbing pursuits, its stupefying love of comfort; by disinterestedness, charity; by zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men; as well as by mental gifts—science and talents to serve the Church; a love of labor and study; a spirit of retirement; courage, determination, prudence, patience, chastity, humility, docility, and a love of prayer.

Yet, even when a person seems to have marks of a real vocation and the necessary dispositions, there may be difficulties to his entrance on the ecclesiastical state, in the provisions with which the Church, for the honor and dignity of God's worship, has environed the way to the priesthood. No one whose mind or reason is in any way affected; who is possessed or subject to epileptic fits, or any disease likely to affect the mind; no one maimed, or distorted, or so disfigured by birth or accident as to repel people, can be admitted. A candidate must be born in lawful wedlock, be a free person; in the Latin Church, unmarried; and the restriction even extends so far as to exclude one who has married twice or married a widow. No one who has shed human blood, or as a judge condemned men to death; no one whose life has been infamous or shameful; no one who has been an actor or public performer for the amusement of the world can enter the sanctuary, except in such grave cases, as rarely occur, where the Church will exert its dispensing power to

remove any of the irregularities incurred by these, in view of particular circumstances.

The candidate should be called by God, be perfect in body and mind, without a stain in the eyes of his fellow-men. The vocation generally develops in the boy; the evident call is seen, directors guide him, a Catholic college becomes his home, and his delight is to minister in the sanctuary—to bear his part, like young Samuel, in the appointed work of God's ministers at the altar. It is soon seen that he loves "the beauty of God's house, and the dwelling-place of His glory"—that His altars are the home to which he would cling as the bird to her nest.

THE TONSURE.

When, at last, he is admitted to the Seminary devoted in an especial manner to the training of young levites for the sanctuary, he undergoes a sacred and holy rite—not a Sacrament or part of Order, but a Sacramental—a preparation for it. This is the Tonsure. It marks the entrance into the ecclesiastical state. The time when it is given is not determined, but is rarely given before the age of fourteen. (1) The Tonsure, or shaving of the head, was, under the Mosaic law, a mark of a vow, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles. (2) As a preparation to the Sacrament of Order, it is said to have been instituted by St. Peter, and is coeval with the establishment of the Church. The practice of wearing it is as old as the time of Pope Gregory, who lived early in the sixth century. By some it is considered to represent the royal dignity of those thus exalted; by others it is viewed as a figure of the crown of thorns which encircled the head of our Lord, that, as His cross has become a symbol of honor, His thorny crown should also be one of dignity.

In its pious signification, this thought of the Divine Master will always be, to the ecclesiastic, a source of consolation and piety. In times when the Church was the acknowledged mistress of Christendom, the Tonsure was always worn—that is, the crown of the head was kept shaved—and this mark of the

(1) Council of Trent, Session xxiii., Ch. 4.

(2) Acts xxi. 24.

ecclesiastical state exempted the wearer from civil jurisdiction marking the lines of the two concurrent powers.

“The office by which our holy mother consecrates the entrance into this state is short, but exquisitely sweet.” The candidate for the Tonsure appears before the bishop in a cassock or soutane, the canonical habit of ecclesiastics, with a surplice on his arm, and a wax taper in his hand. “The psalms (1) chosen are those two beautiful ones, the fifteenth and twenty-third; and wondrously does each of them shroud, in that soft, graceful disguise, which the words of an earlier dispensation throw over the truths of a later, what may be called the sentiment of the peculiar occasion. The fifteenth psalm appears to be said in the person of the candidate; it immediately precedes the act of giving the Tonsure, and embodies a prayer for help, and a pledge of fidelity. ‘Preserve me, O Lord, for I have put my trust in thee! I have said to thee, thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods.’ The key-note of this psalm, as used by the Church, is found in a verse toward its close: ‘The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my chalice: it is thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me.’” These loving words the candidate repeats at the dictation of the bishop; for, like the Sacrament of Order itself, the Tonsure is given only by the bishop. And, while the candidate repeats them, the bishop cuts away some of the hair on the crown of the head, in the form of a cross. After a short prayer by the ordinary, that he, the hair of whose head, through divine love, has been laid aside, may remain always in the love of God, and without spot forever, the choir begins the antiphon of the following psalm, in which the Church, now speaking in her own person, pronounces her words of maternal benediction upon the child whom she has thus adopted into her closer embraces, and reminds him into what kind of privilege she has elected him. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof: the world, and all they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas: and hath prepared it upon the rivers. Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? The innocent in hands, and the clean of heart, who

hath not taken his soul in vain. . . . He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God, his Saviour." These last are the words selected as an antiphon. Then it goes on to characterize the state: "This is the generation of them that seek him, of them that seek the face of Jacob." Nor is the concluding portion of that triumphant psalm less appropriate: "There the angels, in parted companies, like two sides of a choir, discourse with one another in notes of jubilation, upon the entrance of the King of Glory within the heavenly portals." As the chant of the psalm dies away, the bishop proceeds to invest the candidate with the garment of his state—the surplice, which, though at times allowed to those ministering in the sanctuary, is properly the robe of the ecclesiastics only.

The bishop confers it with these words: "May the Lord clothe thee in the new man, who is created according to God in justice and the sanctity of truth."

The soutane worn by him shows that he has renounced the world; the taper is an offering to Jesus Christ, and the tonsured person testifies by this offering that he desires to be consumed as this taper, in the service of God.

The cutting of his hair reminds him that he must be detached from this world, and divested of all superfluity; the words which he repeats are a protestation before Christ and His Church, that in spirit, he takes God for his inheritance, and that he ardently desires to consecrate his whole life to his Lord and Saviour in the ecclesiastical state.

The white surplice, being clerical, reminds him that he is now enrolled as an ecclesiastic; and its pure white is an emblem of the innocence and virtue in which he is obliged to live. The ecclesiastic, thus enrolled, prepares, by study and prayer, for the reception of the first steps in the Sacrament of Holy Order.

The conferring of the tonsure is not regarded as an Order, but rather as a preparation for such. Nor does the reception of any of the four minor orders prevent one from remaining in secular life. The order of subdeaconship, the first of the major orders received, binds the recipient to the life and obligations of the ecclesiastical state. To be ordained lawfully one must have due age and knowledge, must be of good life, and have the signs of a call or vocation from God.

MINOR ORDERS.

OSTIARIUS, OR DOORKEEPER—LECTOR, OR READER—EXORCIST—
ACOLYTE.

UNDERSTOOD in the strict sense, the word "order" means the disposition of superior and subordinate parts, which, when united, present a combination so harmonious as to stand in mutual and accordant relations. Comprising, then, as the ministry does, many gradations and various functions, and disposed, as all these gradations and functions are, with the greatest regularity, this Sacrament is very appropriately called "the Sacrament of Orders." The first steps toward Holy Orders are known as Minor Orders. These have not been the same in all parts of Christendom; the Oriental Church recognizing only two, while in the Latin Church these Minor or Preparatory Orders have from time immemorial been four in number. It has not been expressly defined that these Minor Orders constitute part of the Sacrament, the full and complete conferring of which is attained in the priesthood. "It is certain, however, that in one sense all the seven orders are sacramental, as making up one Sacrament, the Sacrament of Order, represented in the priesthood to which they all conspire."

"These Minor Orders in the Latin Church are the Ostiarius (doorkeeper), Lector or reader, Exorcist, and Acolyte. They are called Minor, to distinguish them from the Major or Holy Orders, by which the ecclesiastic approaches the altar more nearly, and is, in a manner, irrevocably consecrated to the Church. By the receiving of Minor Orders a return to secular life is not absolutely precluded, and no vow of celibacy is implied or made; though the Church, conferring them after long examination, presumes in the ordained a deliberate intention of persevering in the service of the sanctuary.

"The office of the Ostiary, or doorkeeper, is to open and shut the doors of the church, to guard the sanctuary from irreverent intrusion. The symbol of his function is the keys of the church, by which he is to admit the worthy and exclude the unworthy; that is, all who are not Christians, and all Christians who have

forfeited their right to enter by taking part in any heresy or schism, who are excommunicated, denounced, or interdicted. It is also his duty to prevent all from entering the sanctuary of the church who are not necessary for the divine service; to prevent females from entering the choir assigned to the clergy; to prevent noise, speaking, or other irreverence in the church; to keep all the furniture, linens, and ornaments of the altar and church in becoming and proper condition; and, finally, to ring the church bell at the proper periods. The virtues peculiar to his order are zeal, exactness, diligence, firmness, and propriety of general conduct."

Such are the duties as laid down in the Roman Pontifical, and in early times they were discharged by this ordained cleric, assigned especially to them, though some of them are no longer observed, and others discharged by laymen.

"The Lector, or reader, is ordained to read aloud or sing in the church the lessons from the Old Testament, and the writings of the Holy Fathers, which constitute a part of the office of the Church. The portion of Scripture was formerly read by the Lector, and then explained by the priest; but when a bishop officiated, the lesson of Scripture was read by a deacon. The instruction of children and the young, in the prayers and in the Christian doctrine, was also an important and holy duty of the Lectors. To fit them for this duty they were to love the Scriptures, read them with care, meditate on them, and be replenished with the truths they contain. Pupils of the clergy, they were to make a special duty of the doctrines of the Church, and learn to impart them in a manner suited to the intelligence of the young. But as human instruction avails little without God's grace, and to impress early on him this truth, so essential to his future ministry among the flock at large, the Lector was enjoined to pray fervently for the little children committed to his care.

The young ecclesiastic, having passed through the grade of Ostiarius and Lector, was next promoted to the Order of Exorcist. The relation of the Exorcist to the priest is derived from his office of releasing the possessed, and thus qualifying them for the reception of the Holy Communion, from which it is the great

object of the evil spirits to debar them. And here, again, we are recalled to the early ages of Christianity, when the accursed agency of evil spirits was most evident. Practically, the work of the Exorcist in this department is now merged in that of the higher orders—in the priesthood and diaconate, to which is attached the office of baptizing. It was also the duty of the Exorcist to prepare the salt and water for the priest, who blesses them; and, bearing this holy water, to accompany the bishop or priest when they exorcise; and also to bear the holy water vase in the aspersion of the Church. The Exorcist is called upon to lead a life of purity of heart and prayer, and be both humble and mortified.

“As we ascend in the scale, the bearing of these Minor Orders on the priesthood becomes still more evident. The Acolyte, who comes next to the Exorcist, and who stands at the head of the Minor Orders, immediately below the subdeacon, obtains at his ordination the right of handling instruments and vessels which are used in the holy sacrifice, although not those which come in immediate contact with the Blessed Sacrament.

“He receives the candlestick which bears the light of Christ, and the cruets which contain the wine and water before consecration; but these are delivered to him empty, to imply that it devolves upon him to fill them. It is the duty of the Acolyte to light the candles and lamps of the church; to bear these lights during mass and the divine office on solemn occasions. At certain times he is also required to bear the censer and incense; to prepare the fire and incense for use; to prepare the wine and water for the sacrifice, and to give them at the altar to the subdeacon, who ministers them, when filled, through the deacon, to the priest. It is, finally, the duty of the Acolyte to accompany the priest, deacon, and subdeacon at the altar, and to serve them, when such service is required. The faith and the charity of the Acolyte should shine as brilliantly as the lights which he bears, that the world may be edified with the lustre and sweet odor of his life.”

These constitute the Minor Orders in the Latin Church. They are conferred by a bishop only.

THE MAJOR ORDERS.

THE SUBDIACONATE.

SUBDEACONSHIP, Deaconship, and Priesthood constitute the Major or Holy Orders, and are superior in dignity and power. The young levite, who has received the tonsure and then spent years in studying in some seminary especially set apart for the education of young clergymen, receives, when his fitness and vocation are thoroughly tested, the Minor Orders of the Ostiarius, Lector, Exorcist, and Acolyte; and essays, in catechizing and instructing the ignorant, his abilities in directing and guiding others. When the study of dogmatic Theology, or the doctrines of the Church, with the authorities on which they are based, moral Theology, or the vast subject of morals which is to guide him in the Confessional; Holy Scripture; the Canon Laws governing the Church; its rites and ceremonies, has been completed, he prepares to receive the Holy Orders, and binds himself irrevocably to the service of the Church.

“Marriage has never been permitted, either in the Latin or in any of the Oriental Churches, to bishops, priests, deacons or subdeacons, after they were ordained; although, in the Oriental Churches, married men are ordained subdeacons, deacons, and priests. In the Latin Church, they can be ordained only when both man and wife promise solemnly to live separately the rest of their days after the ordination of the husband, and such ordinations are comparatively rare—the wife entering some religious community. In the Greek Church, a married priest can not be made a bishop unless he separates from his wife in this way. The Greek usage as to married priests is a relaxation of ancient discipline, introduced by what is called the Council in Trullo, held in the emperor’s palace at Constantinople, in the sixth century. The Sovereign Pontiffs long opposed this innovation, but, when other matters of difference had been adjusted, yielded on this point for peace’ sake, as it was not a matter pertaining to faith, and tolerate it in the Greek, Armenian, and other Oriental Churches which acknowledge the Pope. The Latin Church, however, maintains the an-

cient discipline of the celibacy of the clergy, that her ecclesiastics may be more detached from the world—from the affairs, distractions, embarrassments, and cares which are inseparable from the married state—and that they may thus be enabled to give their whole heart and all their time and care to the service of God and the good of their neighbors, and be more pure to approach the altar of God and serve the Holy of Holies.”

Subdeacons thus assume the duty of living in a state of celibacy; they also contract the obligation of reciting during their whole life the Divine Office for each day, as contained in the Breviary and Diurnal, the prayer-books of the clergy. This Divine Office is composed of psalms, hymns, and prayers, with lessons from the Old and New Testaments and from the Holy Fathers, and a short sketch of the life of the Saint honored on each day. This office is divided into portions corresponding with the ancient divisions of the day. They are called Matins, Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, and Complin.

“The candidate for Subdeacon’s Orders should be learned, endowed with probity and the gift of continence. He must be at least in his twenty-second year, and have a title to some benefice or patrimony, unless he belongs to a religious order, or is ordained *sub titulo missionis*, for missionary labor in some country where the Catholic religion does not prevail.

“The duties of a Subdeacon are: to aid the deacon, and under him to serve in the functions of the ministry; to sing the Epistle in solemn masses; to pour the water into the wine in the chalice at the solemn mass; to take care of the holy vessels and linens used in the Holy Sacrifice; to wash the palls, purificatories, and corporals; to receive the offerings of the people; to carry the cross in processions; to hold the book of the Gospels while the deacon chants the Gospel of the day, and to present it to the bishop or priest who celebrates, to be kissed by him.

“The ordination is characterized by increased solemnity of rite. At the opening the candidate is reminded that he is still free, and, as he is on the point of surrendering his liberty, the Church urges him to reflect on the serious step he is about to take. She calls upon him to observe that the engagements he is about to

contract are final and irrevocable; and that they involve the sacrifice of the closest and most sacred of human ties. 'Thus far art thou free,' are her solemn words of admonition, 'and it is lawful for thee, at thy option, to pass to secular vows; but if thou dost assume this Order, thou canst no longer abandon thy purpose; but thou must perpetually serve God, serving whom is to be a king, and by His help it will behoove thee to preserve chastity. Therefore, while it is time, reflect.' What consequences to individuals and to the Church of God are wrapped up in that next step! What arts may not the enemy be expected to employ with the view of diverting that steady eye and causing that devoted heart to fail! But more powerful than all his crafty seductions is the memory of the words: 'Every one who leaveth house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting.' "

"Angels, who have been witnesses of the conflict, are now heralds of the victory. The court of heaven has ratified the choice; meanwhile the Church on earth is calling on all her glorified fellow-citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem to mingle their prayers with her own, that 'He who has begun a good work may carry it on to perfection.' Then, when those to be ordained come up, the archdeacon places them in order. The bishop kneels down, and those to be ordained prostrate themselves on their faces on the ground. All others present in the sanctuary kneel, and chanters begin the Litany of the Saints, the choir answering. Just before the close of the petitions in the Litany, the bishop rises with his mitre on, and his crosier in his hand, and says impressively over those to be ordained, while they remain prostrate: 'That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to bless these chosen ones, we beseech Thee to hear us.' He repeats this prayer three times, saying in the second case 'sanctify,' and in the third 'consecrate.' The sacred vessels which are given to the Subdeacon to be touched are the chalice and paten empty, and the cruets filled. The cruets which had been delivered empty at the ordination of the acolyte are now redelivered without any form of words. In the words used in giving the chalice and paten, there is an exquisite touch of

reverence. When the symbols of the inferior orders were given, their names were expressed at the time of the delivery. 'Receive the cruets,' 'Receive the candlestick,' etc. The names of the vessels, however which are to be consecrated by the sacramental presence are suppressed, as if through awe; and instead of any more definite specification, there are these words: 'See whereof the ministry is delivered unto you; therefore I admonish you, that you so demean yourself as to please God.' "

Chastity; the love of study; zeal for the house of God, the spirit of prayer; the love of penance and humility; a love for the Church; docility, and an entire submission to his bishop, with a deep respect for his superiors, the priests and deacons—these are the virtues which should mark the Subdeacon. (1)

The vestment assigned to him while ministering about the altar is the tunic. It should be longer, but not as ample as the dalmatic worn by deacons, but, in general, differs very little from it. The material and color are the same as that worn by the priest on the occasion. Under this vestment are worn the amice, alb, and girdle. These were always worn by subdeacons; the tunic has been assigned to them at a comparatively late period.

At solemn high mass the Subdeacon, during a part of the ceremony, has his shoulders muffled with a species of scarf of an oblong shape, of the same material as the vestments, and known as the veil. In the primitive ages the number of those who received the Blessed Sacrament every Sunday was very great, and the paten from which the Sacramental species was distributed, was of such dimensions that convenience required it to be removed from the altar as soon as the oblation had been made. It was not brought back till the time arrived for giving communion to the people. Instead of laying the paten on a table, or carrying it to the sacristy, the Roman Ritual deemed it more decorous that it should be held by the Subdeacon. The custom of enveloping him in a veil while thus holding, was suggested by the Mosaic law which (2) prohibited the levites from touching the vessels of the sanctuary, under pain of death, until Aaron and his sons had wrapped them up. The greater reverence due the vessels used in

(1) Pouget *Institutiones Catholicæ*.

(2) Num. iv. 2, 15.

the sacrifice of the New Law led the Church to prescribe that the Subdeacon should hold the paten with his veil. (1)

THE DIACONATE.

The priesthood is only more than the Diaconate in that it conveys that power over the real, and over the mystical power of Our Lord, to which the other Orders are, though in different degrees, but introductory and subservient. The deacon is the immediate assistant of the priest at the Holy Sacrifice. He has the plenitude of the lector's as well as of the acolyte's office; he can sing the holy Gospel. He acquires the power of preaching by the express permission of the bishop, as well as of baptizing. He also, in olden times, carried communion, in the species of bread, to the faithful who were absent from the Holy Sacrifice; he "assisted the bishop or priest in all solemn functions of the ministry; he informed the people when to kneel, fall prostrate, or move off in procession; he removed from the church the heathen, the excommunicated, those undergoing the canonical penance, and, at the proper time, the catechumens; he dismissed the people after the office; he was the officer of the bishop, his eye and his arm, in all that regarded exterior policy and the public service of the church, and acted as the almoner of the bishop in the distribution of the goods and alms of the church." In the Oriental Churches, where the laity receive communion under both kinds, the deacons bear the chalice to them. Moreover, unlike the subdeacon, he receives his commission by the imposition of hands and the conveyance of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the order is unquestionably sacramental, although this has not been defined as an article of faith.

The Acts of the Apostles record the institution of the first seven deacons, and one of this number became the protomartyr of the Church—a deacon winning the martyr's crown before priest, bishop, or apostle. Another was the instrument of the conversion of the eunuch of Queen Candace. And later, at Rome, Saint Lawrence the deacon won for the Diaconate a crown of glory.

Saint Paul exacts from deacons the same virtues as from bishops—chastity, rectitude, mortification, disinterestedness; they must be full of faith, charity, prudence, zeal, fervor, firmness, tenderness for the poor, humility, science—in a word, they were to be like the seven deacons, full of the Holy Ghost.

The ordination opens with the *Benedictus*. Then the *Gloria in Excelsis* follows, with the collects, one of them specially adapted to the occasion. When a newly ordained subdeacon has chanted the Epistle, the bishop sits down before the altar, wearing his mitre, and the candidates for the deaconship approach, in amice, alb, girdle, and maniple, with a stole in the left hand, a candle in the right hand, and a dalmatic on the left arm, and fall in a semicircle, on their knees, before the bishop. As in the previous order, the archdeacon asks their ordination: “Most reverend Father, our holy Mother, the Catholic Church, asks that thou ordain these subdeacons here present to the burthen of the Diaconate.”

The bishop asks: “Dost thou know them to be worthy?” The archdeacon replies: “So far as human frailty permits us to know, I both know and attest that they are worthy of the burthen of this office.”

The bishop answers: “Thanks be to God.” Then, sitting down, he addresses the people, saying: “With the help of Almighty God and Our Saviour Jesus Christ, we choose these deacons here present to the Order of Deacon. If any one hath aught against them, let him, for God and for God’s sake, come forth and speak; but let him be mindful of his condition.” Then he addresses the candidates on the office to which they are to be raised, likening it to that of the sons of Levi, ending with these words: “And you, O beloved sons, who receive your name by paternal inheritance, be ye taken away from carnal desires, from earthly concupiscences, that war against the soul. Be ye clear, clean, pure, chaste, as becometh the ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God, that you may be worthily added to the number of the ecclesiastical degrees—that you may merit to be a lovely inheritance and tribe of the Lord. And because you are co-ministers and co-operators of the Body and Blood of the Lord,

be ye strangers to all allurements of the flesh; as the Scripture saith, be ye cleansed, ye who bear the vessels of the Lord. Think of blessed Stephen, chosen by the apostles to this office through the merit of his eminent chastity. Take heed to expound the Gospel by living works, to those to whom you announce it with the lips, that it may be said of you: 'Blessed are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things!' Have your feet shod with the examples of the saints, in the preparation of the Gospel of peace. May the Lord grant you this by His grace."

Then the Litany is said, and, during it, the bishop blesses the prostrate candidates. Then the bishop addresses the clergy and people briefly, and, rising, prays to God to bless, sanctify, and confirm them. A preface like that of the mass is then said by him, adapted to the service, and ending in these words: "Look down propitiously, O Lord, on these Thy servants, whom we suppliantly dedicate to the office of deacon, to serve at Thy sacred altars. And we, indeed, as men ignorant of the divine sense and supreme reason, estimate as we can the life of these men. But things unknown to us escape Thee not, O Lord: things secret deceive Thee not. Thou knowest all secrets; Thou art the searcher of hearts. Thou canst weigh with heavenly judgment, where-with Thou dost ever prevail, the life of these men; judge what is admitted, and grant what is to be done."

Then the bishop alone lays his hand on the head of each, not assisted by others, as is done in conferring the priesthood. With this imposition of hands he says to each: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, for strength to resist the devil and his temptations." Then he prays: "Send down upon them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, whereby they may be strengthened, by the gift of Thy seven-fold grace, to discharge faithfully the work of Thy ministry. May the form of every virtue abound in them—modest authority, constant modesty, the purity of innocence, and the observance of spiritual discipline. May Thy commandment shine forth in their life, that the people may acquire holy imitation by the example of His chastity; and, bearing the testimony of a good conscience, may they persevere, firm and stable in Christ, and by worthy

steps deserve, from the inferior grades, to receive, by Thy grace the more excellent."

Then resuming his seat, he takes the stole from the hand of each, and lays it on his left shoulder, saying: "Receive ✠ the white stole from the hand of God; fulfill thy ministry; for God is powerful to increase His grace in thee." As he makes the sign of the cross, the attendants turn back the stole and bind the ends under the right arm. Then the bishop vests each one in the dalmatic as far as the shoulders, if only one is used, but vesting them completely if each has his own. While conferring this, he says: "May the Lord attire thee in the garment of salvation, and the vestment of joy, and ever surround thee with the dalmatic of justice in the name of the Lord." Then he gives to each the Book of the Gospels, which they touch with the right hand. "Receive the power of reading the Gospel in the Church of God, both for the living and the dead."

Then follow two prayers, one begging God to send down the spirit of His blessing upon them, the other more extended: "O Holy Lord! Father of faith, hope, and grace, and rewarder of good: who, in the heavenly and earthly ministries of angels, disposed on all sides, diffusest through all the elements, the effect of Thy will: vouchsafe to enlighten these, Thy servants, also with spiritual affection; that, unencumbered in Thy service, they may stand at Thy altars, pure ministers; and, purer by Thy indulgence, be worthy of the rank of those whom Thy apostles guided by the Holy Ghost, chose, to the number of seven, blessed Stephen being chief and head; and may they please Thee, endowed with all virtues wherewith it behooveth to serve Thee; through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then one of the newly-ordained deacons chants the Gospel and the mass proceeds.

The special vestment of the deacon is the dalmatic. It is a long robe, open on each side, and differs from the priest's chasuble by having a species of wide sleeve, and, instead of being marked on the back with the cross, which superseded the senatorial *latus clavus*, is ornamented with two stripes, that were originally the *angustus clavus*, worn upon their garments by the less

dignified amongst the Roman people. This vestment came from Dalmatia, whence its name; but was a royal garment at Rome, having been worn in public by several of the Roman emperors. In the reign of Constantine the Great, Pope St. Sylvester allowed the deacons of the Roman Church to wear the dalmatic on certain occasions, instead of the colobium, the ancient deacon's vestment. Before the time of St. Gregory, its use became general in the Church. Its original color was white, and the stripes scarlet, but by the tenth century it was made of the same color as the priest's vestments of the day. (1)

THE PRIESTHOOD.

The Priesthood, as described in Scripture, is two-fold, internal and external. The internal Priesthood extends to all the faithful, particularly to the just. Through faith inflamed by charity, they offer spiritual sacrifices to God on the altar of their hearts. The Apocalypse says: "Christ hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us priests." The external Priesthood does not extend indiscriminately to the great body of the faithful; it is appropriated to a certain class of persons, who, being invested with this august character and consecrated to God by the lawful imposition of hands, are devoted to some particular office in the ministry. It is of this external Priesthood that we here speak.

"The Priesthood is the crown of the Orders. In it the Sacrament of Holy Orders culminates. In conferring the Priesthood, the Church comes forth in the plenitude of her greatness. What earthly power shall presume to vie with that which Saint John Chrysostom rates above the dignity of angels? The angels, indeed, see their Lord face to face, but to them is not given, as to the priests, the control of his very Body. He vouchsafes, of His abundant condescension, to obey the bidding of His creatures; to descend at their word upon our altars; to contract Himself within the limits of space. He, the incomprehensible and infinite, to be handled by human hands, and to dispense Himself among His people! This is the climax of charity—the lowest depth of His

(1) Rock's Hierurgia.

humiliation. In the incarnation He veiled His Deity, but in the sacrifice to be offered by the hand of His minister even His humanity lies hid, as the hymn expresses it. And as if it were not enough to disrobe Himself of power and beauty, and all for love of us—as if it were a small thing to repose so meekly upon our altars, it is in this Sacrament, more than in any other part of His dispensation to mankind, that He sustains an almost ceaseless infliction of affront and blasphemy. The sufferings of the cross are perpetuated from age to age in the mystery which gives to men the proof and relish of its blessedness. But no! here is still a difference. When the cross was endured, no man stood with the Redeemer to comfort Him; none was there to sympathize with His sorrows, but blessed Mary, His Mother, and faithful John, His friend, and loving Magdalene, His disciple; and even they were debarred the privilege of ministering to Him, and soothing His griefs. It is not so in what He suffers now. The Blessed Sacrament, though it be the provocative of the keenest insults, is also the incentive to the tenderest affection that awe permits.”

“The Church, full of this thought, would impress on us her sense of the majesty of those functions with which her priests are charged, by the character of the rite through which she conveys them. It is the longest of the ordination services, the most varied in its features, the most arresting in its tone, the most awful in its accompaniments.”

The Ember days of Advent are especially set apart for this important rite—the conferring of this great Sacrament, exalting man to a privilege which human intelligence never could have ventured to conceive.

The bishop, attired in his robes and mitre, seated at the Epistle side of the altar, with chaplains holding the book and candle, reads the Tract and Prose of the Holy Ghost. Then the archdeacon summons, in a loud voice, the candidates for the Priesthood. They advance as named, clad in amice, alb, stole, and maniple, holding a folded chasuble over the left arm, and a candle and linen bands in the right hand. As they form in a circle around the bishop, the archdeacon, in the name of the

faithful, solicits their ordination, saying: "Most reverend Father, our holy Mother, the Catholic Church, asks that these deacons here present be ordained by thee to the burthen of the priesthood." As in previous ordinations, he assures himself of their worthiness. Then he addresses the people, calling upon them to bring forward anything that may justly be deemed a bar to their exaltation to so high and so vital a dignity, on which the salvation of souls depend. As no voice rises to convict any of unworthiness, the bishop turns to those about to enter the Priesthood, and, in earnest words, warns them:

"Dearly beloved sons, about to be consecrated to the office of the Priesthood—endeavor to receive it worthily, and, when received, to fulfill it in a praiseworthy manner. For it behooveth the priest to offer sacrifice, to bless, to govern, preach, baptize. With deep fear, then, should you ascend to so great a degree, and care is to be taken that heavenly wisdom, pure morals, and a long practice of righteousness, commend those chosen for it. Hence, when the Lord commanded Moses to elect to his assistance seventy men out of all Israel, with whom he should communicate the gifts of the Holy Ghost, added: 'Whom thou knowest that they be elders of the people.' You, indeed, are signed with the seventy men and elders, if, keeping the decalogue of the law through the seven-fold spirit, you shall be upright and mature alike in knowledge and in work. Under the same mystery and the same figure, our Lord, in the New Testament, chose seventy-two, and sent them, two by two, before His face to preach, that He might teach both by word and deed, that they ought to be perfect ministers of His Church, by faith and work, or endowed with the virtue of the two-fold love, that is, of God and their neighbor. Such, therefore, study to be, that you may avail, by God's grace, to be chosen to the aid of Moses and the twelve apostles, to wit, of the Catholic bishops, who are duly prefigured by Moses and the apostles. By this wonderful variety the holy Church is surrounded, adorned, and ruled; inasmuch as, in her, men are consecrated to various orders; some bishops, some of inferior order, priests, deacons, and subdeacons; that, of many members of different dignity, the one body of Christ is formed. Therefore, dearly be-

loved sons, whom the judgment of our brethren has chosen to be consecrated to assist us, preserve in your manners the integrity of a chaste and holy life. Mark what you do; imitate what you handle; that, celebrating the mystery of the Lord's death, you may endeavor to mortify your members from all vice and concupiscences. Let your doctrine be a spiritual medicine for God's people: may the odor of your life be the delight of Christ's Church; that, by preaching and example, you may edify the house, that is, the family of God; that neither we may deserve to be condemned by the Lord for advancing you, nor you for undertaking so great an office, but that we, rather, may merit reward. May He grant it to us by His grace!"

Then is the Litany chanted, to invoke not only the Holy Trinity to confirm the work, but all the angelic choirs and the blessed in heaven, to intercede at the throne of the Most High. Next all rise, and the candidates approach the bishop two by two. As they kneel, the successor of the apostles imposes both hands on the head of each in silence; and the attending priests, vested as for mass, do the same. Then while the bishop and the priests hold their hands extended over the new priests, he says: "Let us pray, dearest brethren, to God, the Father Almighty, that He will multiply His heavenly gifts in these His servants, whom He hath chosen to the ministry of the Priesthood; and that what they receive through His condescension they may accomplish by His aid."

Then is chanted a preface, recalling the Levitical ministry and Priesthood of Aaron, and the call of the seventy, and closing with the prayer: "Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty Father, to these Thy servants, the dignity of the Priesthood; renew in their bowels the spirit of sanctity, that they may obtain from Thee, O God, the accepted gift of consequent merit, and insinuate a scrutiny of morality by the example of their conversation. May they be prudent co-operators of our order; may the form of all justice shine forth in them, that, giving hereafter a good account of the dispensing committed to them, they may attain the rewards of eternal bliss."

Then the bishop, seated, crosses the stole on the breast of each

one, saying: "Receive the yoke of the Lord, for my yoke is sweet, and my burthen light." Then he puts on each the chasuble, doubled to the shoulder, saying: "Receive the sacerdotal vestment, by which is understood charity; for God is powerful to increase in thee charity and a perfect work."

Again, in solemn prayer, he invokes the aid of the Almighty in the great act he is performing, exercising a mighty power, yet conscious of man's infirmity:

"O God! author of all sanctification, of whom is true consecration and full benediction, do Thou, O Lord, pour forth the gifts of Thy blessing on these Thy servants, whom we dedicate to the honor of the Priesthood, that they may prove themselves elders by the gravity of their actions and their unimpeachable life, trained in those instructions which Paul gave to Titus and Timothy; that, meditating night and day on Thy law, they may believe what they read; teach what they believe; imitate what they teach; display in themselves justice, constancy, mercy, fortitude, and all other virtues; preach them by example; confirm them by admonition; and keep the gift of their ministry pure and immaculate, and, for the service of Thy people, by immaculate blessing, transform bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Thy Son; and, by a pure conscience, true faith, and inviolable charity, rise again, full of the Holy Ghost, unto a perfect man, to the measure of the fullness of Christ, in the day of the just and eternal judgment of God."

Then the "Veni Creator" resounds, and the bishop anoints, with the oil of catechumens, the palm of each hand of the new priest, saying: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to consecrate and sanctify these hands by this unction and our blessing," and, making the sign of the cross, "That whatever they bless may be blessed, and whatever they consecrate may be consecrated and sanctified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then he closes the hands of each one together, and an attendant binds them together with a linen cloth, reminding one of the moment recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, where in a figure the prophet Agabus bound his hands with Paul's girdle.

The new priests have been vested in the vestments of their

order, as Eleazar was in those of Aaron; the sacred vessels are next confided to them. The bishop hands to each, in succession, the chalice, containing wine and water, with the paten lying on it, holding a host. The meaning of this ceremony and its power is shown in the words uttered by the bishop: "Receive power to offer sacrifice to God and celebrate masses, both for the living and the dead, in the name of the Lord."

Then the mass proceeds, one of the newly-ordained saying the prayer *Munda cor meum*, and chanting the Gospel. At the offertory they offer to the bishop their lighted candles; and, as the mass goes on, they repeat the words of the bishop. This is a remnant, and a touching one, of the ancient discipline of the Church. Then, when the bishop celebrated, all the priests of the particular church celebrated with him, as a mark of their union with their immediate head, and to testify that the sacrifice is offered, not for the celebrant alone, but for all who assist. They receive the kiss of peace at the pax; and all communicate at the hands of the bishop.

At the close, they recite the Apostles' Creed, to make a solemn profession of that faith which they are to announce to the people, on the part of God and His Church. When they have thus proclaimed the faith, the bishop again imposes both hands on the head of each, saying, in the words of Jesus Christ: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Then, as the fullness of the power is bestowed, the chasuble, hitherto folded up to the shoulder, is now let down, with the words: "May the Lord clothe thee with the stole of innocence."

Then, as discipline and order are essential to the government of the Church, he asks each one: "Dost thou promise reverence and obedience to me and my successors?" and, entering the ranks of the clergy of the diocese, the new priest promises fidelity in all that regards the ecclesiastical ministry.

To show that this sway is to be one of love, not of severity, the Christian bishop, holding the hands of each between his own, kisses him, saying: "The peace of our Lord be ever with thee."

Such is the venerable, touching rite of ordination of a priest

in the holy Catholic Church, on which emperors, and kings, and parliaments, and reichstags, have felt themselves at liberty to lay their rude and sacrilegious hands.

“The whole rite is constructed upon a high and mysterious view of the sacerdotal dignity. It differs from the rite of ordaining to the inferior degrees, in the double, or rather triple, imposition of hands—that is to say: once, when the bishop imposes his hands in silence; then, when he extends his hands together with the priests who are present, saying at the same time an appointed prayer; and, lastly, in the bestowal of the power of the keys at the end; in the consecration of the hands; in the delivery of the sacred vessels, duly prepared for the holy sacrifice; in the investiture with the stole and chasuble; in the profession of faith; in the promise of canonical obedience; and in the act of concelebration with the bishop.”

THE VESTMENTS OF THE PRIEST AT MASS.

The vestments in which the priest, deacon, and subdeacon are attired in their ordination are those worn by them in their respective parts at the celebration of mass.

The AMICE, the first of these, is a piece of fine linen, of an oblong square form, which is worn on the shoulders, and crossed over in front. It was formerly a hood, thrown back during service, and is still so used by the priests of some orders, as the Dominicans and Capuchins, and by the clergy of some particular churches in Europe. In putting it on, the priest places it first on his head, and alludes to this in his prayer: “Place upon my head, O Lord, the helmet of salvation, that I may be enabled to repel all the fiery darts of the wicked one.” The Amice is like the ephod of the Jewish priest, and is not without its mystic signification in the use to which the Church applies it.

The ALB is an ample linen tunic, so called from the Latin word *alba* (white). This ancient linen tunic, once the general garb, in the days of our Lord, is retained by the Church to the use of her priests, deacons, and subdeacons, when ministering at the altars. The lower part of the Alb was anciently ornamented with scarlet stripes, or fringed with gold. It is in use, not only in the Latin,

but in the Greek, Syriac, Coptic, and other Oriental Churches. This snow-white garment is beautifully emblematic of that spotless purity which should characterize all who approach the altar of God. The priest, alluding to the Apocalypse (Apoc. xxii. 14) says, while putting on this garment: "Cleanse me, O Lord, and purify my soul, that, sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, it may be fitted for eternal felicity."

THE GIRDLE. The tunic was always girt by a cincture, and the Church retains it most appropriately, as our Lord and His apostles make a spiritual reference to the custom (St. Luke xii. 35; Eph. vi. 14). As in olden times the loosely girt were deemed dissipated, so the girded loins betokened a pure life. Hence, the priest, putting it on, says: "Gird my reins, O Lord, with the girdle of purity; extinguish in my heart the fire of concupiscence; and may the flames of Thy holy love consume every earthly affection, everything therein that is unworthy of Thee."

The **MANIPLE**, now an embroidered vestment, worn on the left arm, was originally a linen handkerchief. The name means also a sheaf, and the prayer used in putting it on shows the spiritual meaning attached to it: "O Lord, may I be found worthy to bear the maniple of sorrow and affliction, that I may reap with joy the reward of my labors"—an allusion to Ps. cxxv. 6, 7.

The **STOLE** was originally, according to some, the *Laticlavus*, a mark of honor; and has its antecedent in the veil worn by the Jews at prayer, the subdeacon's veil having a similar character. The mystic signification is beautifully expressed in the words of the prayer used in assuming it: "Restore to me, O Lord, the robe of immortality which was forfeited by the prevarication of our first parents; and, though unworthy to celebrate so august a mystery, grant that I may attain to everlasting glory." The stole is worn around the neck, the ends being crossed on the breast; but a bishop wears it hanging down on each side.

THE CHASUBLE. Over these the priest, when preparing to celebrate mass, puts the chasuble. This was originally, like the tunic of the Jewish high-priest's ephod, a square or round cloth with a hole in the center for the head. The chasuble worn to this day in the Greek Church is of this form; and it falls around the whole

person, unless the arms are kept up so as to be free. This requires, at times, the assistance of attendants. In the Latin Church, from its greater missionary field and the necessity of priests' frequently traveling, and with few clerics to attend them, the sides were cut open to give play to the hands, and the garment gradually trimmed down to the present shape. For more than a thousand years, the chasuble has been the characteristic vestment of the priest, assigned to him at his ordination, as the habit peculiar to his order when about to offer up the holy Eucharistic Sacrifice. The cross was early marked upon it in embroidery, though the position varies. In this country, following the usage of France, Belgium, England, and Ireland, the cross is on the back of the chasuble, while, in Italy and other countries, it is on the front.

More than one spiritual signification has been attached to the chasuble. Alcuin, in A.D. 800, regards it as emblematical of charity, and this idea is conveyed in the ordination service; St. Germain of Auxerre says that it represents the purple garment in which our Lord was attired. It is also said to express the yoke of obedience and the burthen of the priesthood; and this is implied in the following prayer, said by the priest when putting it on: "O Lord, Thou hast declared that Thy yoke is sweet and Thy burthen light; grant that I may carry that which Thou dost now impose upon my shoulders, in such a manner as to merit Thy grace." (1)

In Catholic countries, where canon law prevails, the people or faithful are divided into fixed and proper parishes, and to each parish is assigned its own perpetual and peculiar parish priest, from whom alone the faithful may, as a rule, lawfully receive the Sacraments. He is assisted by as many curates or assistants as are necessary for the wants of the parish. He is, as a rule, appointed for life, and is, generally speaking, removable only for causes expressly stated in law and after due trial. In the United States, and generally in missionary countries where the diocesan government is not yet fully and perfectly organized, congregations are considered merely as missions, not canonically established

(1) Rock's Hierurgia, 611, 645.

parishes, and the pastors appointed to them are removable, generally speaking, at the pleasure of the bishop.

The priests serving the churches under the bishop, and doing the parochial duty, or otherwise employed by him or directly under his jurisdiction, are called secular priests. Those who belong to monastic or other religious orders are known as regular priests.

THE OFFICE AND DIGNITY OF BISHOPS.

FORM OF CONSECRATION.

THE bishops of the Church are the direct successors of the apostles, holding the fullness of all sacerdotal powers, and are a degree superior to the priests. This the Council of Trent defines, without distinctly stating that the Episcopate is an order, properly so called, or the consecration conferred on a bishop an ordination. But, while the question may be debated among scholastics, the general teaching has always been that the rite is sacramental.

Bishops were instituted in various parts by the apostles, as converts were gained by their preaching. They were themselves the first bishops of the Church, and the doctrine of apostolic succession was shown in the case of Judas Iscariot, whose dignity, forfeited by his sin and death, is expressly called a bishopric, by St. Luke, in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Almost every one of the apostles is known as the bishop of some fixed see; Saint Peter, of Antioch and Rome; Saint John, of Ephesus; Saint James, of Jerusalem; Saint Paul, who was in a manner missionary bishop to the gentiles, did not fix himself in any city, but consecrated bishops in various parts (Acts xx. 28; Philip. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 2; 2 Tim. i. 6; Tit. i. 7). The early fathers and ecclesiastical historians give the succession of bishops in many of these sees, from the apostles' to their time; and especially of that of Rome, where Saint Peter fixed his see, and which became, from his superior dignity, the head and mother of all the Churches.

Bishops receive their appointment from the Pope, as representing Saint Peter; and representing not only his primacy, but his apostleship.

The manner of selecting the candidate for the Episcopate has differed at different times, and the Popes have, in some cases, conceded to the civil power the privilege of nominating subjects whom they deemed worthy; but this has often created manifold embarrassments for the Church. Where the Church is perfectly free, the selection for the successor of a deceased bishop is made by the chapter of the Cathedral Church, or by the clergy of the diocese at large, or by the bishops of the province to which the bishop belonged. In some countries nominations are made both by clergy and bishops. There are generally three names selected, and marked as *dignus*, worthy; *dignior*, more worthy; *dignissimus*, most worthy. These nominations are laid before the Pope, and after inquiry into the fitness of the candidates, the Sovereign Pontiff selects one of the three, or, if he deem best, some other and appoints him bishop of the see. The appointments to the Episcopate are from time to time officially proclaimed, or, as it is called, preconized at Rome by the Pope in consistory. An official letter, called a bull, from the round seal attached to it, is sent to the bishop elect, and he is then consecrated.

Three bishops are required, by the ancient canons, and by the general practice of the Church, for the consecration; though, in some instances, the places of the two assistant bishops are filled by priests, by a special dispensation of the Apostolic See. This was the case in this country when the Rt. Rev. Leonard Neale was consecrated by Bishop Carroll, who was the only bishop in the United States, and of course could not obtain the assistance of two other bishops without sending out of the country to Canada or the Spanish provinces.

At the time appointed for the consecration, the bishops, with the elect, go in procession to the church, and the Consecrator is vested in full pontificals, as are the assistants in rochets, stoles, capes, and mitres; and the elect puts on the amice, alb, cincture, and stole, crossed on his breast as a priest. Then the Consecrator sits at the altar, and the elect, wearing his small cap, is led to

him by the assistant bishops; and, after saluting him, they sit down, the assistant bishops on either side of the elect.

The senior assistant then addresses the Consecrator: "Most reverend Father, our holy Mother, the Catholic Church, requires of you to raise this priest, here present, to the burthen of a bishop."

The consecratory bishop asks whether they have the Apostolic Commission, and requests that it be read. When the notary has publicly read the document, the bishop elect, kneeling before the consecrator, recites the following oath of duty and fidelity:

"I, N., elect of the Church of N., will be, from this hour henceforward, obedient to blessed Peter the Apostle, and to the holy Roman Church, and to the most blessed Father, Pope N., and to his successor canonically chosen. I will assist them to retain and defend, against any man whatever, the Roman Popedom, without prejudice to my rank. I will take care to preserve, defend, and promote the rights, honors, privileges, and authority of the Holy Roman Church, of the Pope, and of his successors, as aforesaid. With my whole strength I will observe, and cause to be observed by others, the rules of the holy Fathers, the decrees, ordinances or dispositions, and mandates of the Apostolic See. When called to a synod I will come, unless I be prevented by a canonical impediment. I will personally visit the Apostolic See once every ten years, and render an account to our most blessed Father N., and his successors as aforesaid, of my whole pastoral office, and of everything in any way appertaining to the estate of my Church, to the discipline of the clergy and people, and to the salvation of the souls entrusted to my care; and I will humbly receive, in return, the Apostolic mandates, and most diligently execute them. But if I be prevented by a lawful impediment, I will perform all the things aforesaid by a certain messenger, specially authorized for this purpose, a priest of the diocese, or by some other secular or regular priest of tried virtue and piety, well instructed on all the above subjects.

"I will not sell nor give away, nor mortgage, enfeoff anew, nor in any way alienate the possessions belonging to my table, without the leave of the Roman Pontiff. And should I proceed to

any alienation of them, I am willing to incur *ipso facto* the penalties specified in the constitution published on this subject."

When the formulary has been recited, the Consecrator, holding with both his hands the Book of the Gospels, open in his lap, the elect still kneeling before him, touches the sacred text with both hands, and says: "So may God help me, and these holy Gospels of God." Then the Consecrator says: "Thanks be to God."

Then follows the examination, which is made in almost the identical words prescribed by the fourth Council of Carthage.

These turn upon the duties of the episcopal office, and to each question the bishop elect answers: "I will." Then follows a series of questions, embracing the creed and profession of faith, to which he answers: "I believe."

Then he approaches and kisses his hand. After this, the Consecrator, laying aside his mitre, begins the mass, which continues in the usual form to the end of the tract after the Epistle—a collect appropriate to the occasion being introduced—the elect, who has laid aside the cope and assumed the pectoral cross, assisting the Consecrator, in tunic, dalmatic, and chasuble, with stole uncrossed. Then the Consecrator again takes his seat at the altar, and states the duties of the Episcopacy in these simple terms: "It behooves a bishop to judge, interpret, consecrate, ordain, baptize, and confirm." Then, he invites the faithful present to pray, the elect prostrates himself on the left of the Consecrator, and all but the Consecrator kneel, while the Litany of the Saints is sung. Toward the end, the Consecrator pronounces a clause of blessing thrice over the elect, who still remains in a prostrate position, emblematic of the interior humiliation of the soul in the presence of the infinite majesty of God. This is one of those grand and touching rites whose effect can not easily be described. Whilst all the congregation and clergy are kneeling, the Consecrator rises, and, with his crosier in his left hand turned toward them, prays: "That God may vouchsafe to bless—to bless ✠ and sanctify—to bless ✠ and sanctify ✠ and consecrate ✠ this elect here present."

After the Litany is ended, the Consecrator, with the aid of the assistant bishops, places the Book of the Gospel open on the

shoulders of the elect, where it is sustained by one of the chaplains until it is delivered into his hands at a subsequent part of the ceremony.

“The instruction conveyed by this rite is easily perceived. The Gospel must not be a sealed book to the bishop, for woe to him unless he preach the Gospel! This rite is very ancient, being found in all the ancient rituals, Latin, Greek, and Syriac.

“Next follows the imposition of hands. The Consecrator and the assistant bishops lay their hands upon the head of the elect, each of them touching the head with both hands, saying: ‘Receive thou the Holy Ghost.’

“Then the Consecrator, standing, prays: ‘Be propitious, O Lord, to our supplications; and, inclining over this, Thy servant, the horn of priestly grace, pour out upon him the virtue of Thy blessing.’ ”

He next intones a sacred canticle, resembling, in its style, the preface used at mass, that ancient form still discernible in Jewish rites, and here specially adapted to the occasion. The typical signification of the vesture of the ancient priesthood is beautifully set forth, and it is observed that the splendor of the soul must be the chief ornament of a Christian Pontiff.

“The Consecrator then, on bended knees, invokes the Holy Ghost in the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and, at the end of the first verse, seats himself, and, assuming the mitre, makes the sign of the cross on the head of the bishop elect with holy chrism, and anoints the whole tonsure, saying: ‘May thy head be anointed and consecrated with a heavenly benediction in the Pontifical Order, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ This unction is intended to signify the interior unction of the Holy Spirit. It is a rite of high antiquity in the Latin Church, according to Morini, and is found in the *Ordo Romanus*. A prayer full of beauty, asking God to bestow His graces on the new bishop, follows, and the 132d psalm, describing the consecration of Aaron, is sung. Then follows the anointing of the hands, which the elect, kneeling before the Consecrator extends side by side. They are thrice anointed with chrism, with these words: ‘May those hands be anointed with consecrated oil

and the chrism of sanctification; as Samuel anointed David king and prophet, so may they be anointed and consecrated.' He prays, too, that whatever the new bishop shall bless, may be blessed and whatsoever he shall sanctify, may be sanctified."

The next ceremony is the blessing of the Crosier, or Pastoral Staff. It is intended to signify that the power and grace of the pastoral office must be derived from God, the supporter of human weakness. The admonition that is given with this emblem of authority is as follows: "Receive the staff of the pastoral offices, that thou mayest be piously severe in the correction of vices, exercising judgment without wrath, soothing the minds of the hearers in cherishing virtue, not abandoning a just severity in mildness."

The ring, which is blessed and placed on the right hand of the new bishop, is an emblem of the fidelity which he owes the Church: "Take this ring, as the seal of faith, that, being adorned with inviolate faith, thou mayest, without stain, guard the spouse of God, to wit, His Holy Church."

An offering is then made by the new bishop, consisting of two lighted torches, two loaves, and two ornamented small barrels of wine. This is a relic of ancient discipline.

Then the mass proceeds with some additional prayers for the occasion, and the new bishop communicates in both kinds with the Consecrator. After the solemn benediction, the Consecrator blesses the mitre, and puts it on the head of the new bishop, saying: "We place, O Lord, on the head of this prelate and combatant, the helmet of protection and salvation." The gloves are then blessed and put on the hands of the new bishop, and their mystical signification explained.

The ceremony of placing the new bishop on the Episcopal chair is next performed. Then the *Te Deum* is sung, and during the chant the new bishop makes the circuit of the church, giving the pontifical blessing.

The Gospel of St. John then closes the mass, in the usual way.

THE MITRE, CROSIER, RING, ETC.

The peculiar marks of the Episcopal rank are the mitre, crosier, ring, and gloves. The MITRE had its origin in the metal plate

worn on the forehead by the Jewish high-priest. The historian Eusebius, and St. Epiphanius, tell us that the apostles St. John and St. James wore similar marks of the Pontificate. In the fourth century, bishops are described as wearing a kind of crown. (1) This, by the tenth century, had assumed the form of the present mitre, but it was low. It was first used by the Roman Pontiffs, who permitted its use to bishops; thus Innocent II. placed his own mitre on the head of St. Malachy, archbishop of Armagh. Gradually it was made higher, till it attained its present form about the sixteenth century. (2)

The CROSIER, or pastoral staff, is intended to signify that the power and grace of the pastoral office must be derived from God, the supporter of human weakness. It is called in ancient writers "*baculus pastoralis*," "*ferula*," "*pedum*," "*cambuta*," etc. It is mentioned at an early date, by St. Remigius, bishop of Rheims, in the fifth century; by the biographers of St. Patrick, who flourished in that century; by Saint Gregory and Saint Isidore. In time it became large, of rich material, and highly ornamented. The crosier of an archbishop is not a hooked crosier, but a cross; a patriarch or primate has two cross-bars, and the Pope's crosier three.

The RING was, among the ancients, a sign of authority, and was early adopted by the Church; it is mentioned as an emblem of Episcopal authority as early as the fourth Council of Toledo, in the sixth century.

In time, the mitre and crosier were granted to certain abbots; but their mitre is properly of the second or third order, and the crosier has a veil or banner, and, when used, has the crook turned toward the abbot—not toward the people, as a bishop holds his. (3)

(1) Eusebius, St. Gregory Nazianzen, Ammianus Marcellinus.

(2) Milner.

(3) Milner.

THE ARCHIEPISCOPATE.

THE PALLIUM.

THE consecration of an archbishop is similar to that of a bishop, but he is not fully inducted into the archiepiscopate till he receives the pallium, the special mark of that dignity. The pallium is a vestment made of lambs' wool, dotted with purple crosses; it is worn on the shoulders, with a lapel hanging down the breast and back. It is a token of the spiritual jurisdiction of metropolitans over the Churches of their whole province. On the feast of Saint Agnes, the abbot of Saint Peter's ad Vincula blesses, in the Church of Saint Agnes on the Nomentan road, two lambs, which are then carried to the Pope and blessed by him. The lambs are next sent to the nuns of San Lorenzo in Panisperna, or the Capuchin nuns, who shear them and make the palliums, which are laid on the tomb of Saint Peter the night preceding his feast, and are then blessed by the Pope. The pallium is an emblem of humility, charity, meekness, purity, and innocence, and serves to put the prelate in mind that he is bound to seek out, like the good shepherd, and carry home on his shoulders, the strayed sheep of his flock. (1)

The archbishop, or metropolitan, governs his own diocese as a bishop; but has certain jurisdiction over a number of other dioceses which form his province, the bishops of which are called his suffragans; and in provincial councils, where the bishops of those sees assemble, he presides. In some countries, where there are several archbishops, one see is often, from its antiquity, or some other reason, regarded as the first in dignity, and the archbishop of that see is called the primate of the country. A few archbishops are also known by the title of patriarchs. Archbishops date back to the time of the apostles. Saint Timothy exercised such jurisdiction over all the churches of Asia Minor; Saint Titus over those of Crete. (2)

(1) Butler, Jan. 21, June 8, notes.

(2) Butler, Sept. 5, note.

THE PAPACY.

THE CARDINALS OR COUNCIL OF THE POPE—MODE OF ELECTION OF A POPE—CORONATION—POWERS OF THE POPE IN GOVERNING THE CHURCH—POWERS IN DEFINING THE FAITH AND CONDEMNING ERROR—INFALLIBILITY—COUNCILS.

At the head of the whole Catholic hierarchy stands the Pope; the successor of Saint Peter, and Vicar of Christ, from whom primates, archbishops, and bishops receive appointment and powers. The Pope, in the government of the Church, is assisted by the College of Cardinals, whose number was fixed by Pope Paul IV. and Pope Sixtus V. at seventy—six Cardinal bishops, fifty Cardinal priests, and fourteen Cardinal deacons. Cardinals were, originally, the regionary bishops and clergy of the city of Rome, and Cardinal bishops and priests always have the title of some church in Rome. The Cardinalate is not sacramental, and the conferring of the dignity is not Holy Orders. When the Pope has selected a person, his name is in time announced in a consistory, and this is styled a promotion of Cardinals. The red calotte, a skull-cap, is then dispatched to the new Cardinal by a member of the Pope's nobleguard, and if he be not a resident of Rome, an ablegate with a brief and credentials is sent with the biretta, which is formally presented to the Cardinal, generally in the Cathedral Church. Within a year he must proceed to Rome to receive the other insignia. The closing and opening of the mouth of new cardinals is the first ceremony. The ring and title are conferred together, after the unsealing of the mouth. The Cardinal, kneeling before the Pope, receives the gold ring, set with a sapphire, which the Pope places on his finger and commits the titular church to his care.

The consigning of the Pontifical hat is the last of the ceremonies.

“Innocent IV., at the Council of Lyons in 1245, bestowed the red hat upon Cardinals, as a token that they should be ever ready to shed their blood for the defense of the liberties of the Church and of Christian nations. In placing the hat upon the head of

the new Cardinal, the Sovereign Pontiff addresses him in these words: 'To the praise of God Almighty, and for the ornament of the Holy Apostolic See, receive this red hat, special insignia of the dignity of the Cardinalate; by it is expressed that thou shouldst show thyself intrepid unto death, and even unto the shedding of blood, for the exaltation of the Holy Faith, for the peace and tranquillity of Christian nations, for the increase and the prosperity of the Holy Roman Church.'

"This hat is of red cloth, lined with red silk, with a red silk cord around the crown, and tassels of red silk in five rows. It is merely one of the insignia, and is not worn. Each Cardinal priest is assigned to a church in Rome, which becomes his titular church.

"The Cardinals are at the head of all the departments in the government of the Church, and to them is confined the election of a Pope; the Cardinal Camerlingo, with three others, administering the government till an election is had.

"After the burial of a deceased Pope, the Cardinals assemble in a church, and walk in procession with their conclavists, a secretary, and a chaplain, to the great gate of the palace, in which one will remain as Sovereign Pontiff. Should two-thirds of the votes center in any person, he is at once Pope, beyond the reach of any exterior influence; but certain Catholic States, represented in the conclave by Cardinals, have long claimed a kind of veto; and when the votes seem accumulating on one obnoxious to any of these, an objection is raised on the part of the State he represents. The Cardinals meet twice a day in the chapel belonging to the palace, and vote by ballot, the ballots being burned each time, if no election is attained.

"When a Pope is chosen, a door leading out on a balcony previously walled up, is broken open, and the first Cardinal Deacon steps through and announces the result: 'I give you tidings of great joy: we have as Pope the most Eminent and Reverend Lord ———, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church ———, of the title of St. ——— who has assumed the name of ———.'

"If the newly-elected Pope is not a bishop, he is consecrated a bishop and crowned with the triple crown. From his election he

is head of the Church—can decree, rule, name or depose bishops and exercise every duty of pontifical jurisdiction; but he can not ordain or consecrate till he has received the imposition of hands from bishops inferior to himself.” (1)

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE.

The Pope has always been the head of the Church, exercising a primacy and governing power over bishops, priests, and people. He has been in all ages the supreme judge of matters of faith, condemning all errors, and excluding from the communion of the Church those who propagated or professed them. Still, questions had arisen whether the power of deciding infallibly on matters of faith was vested in the Pope alone; or the Pope, supported by the consent of the Catholic Episcopate throughout the world; or in the Pope, acting with a general council convened by him.

All these questions were forever closed by the Council of the Vatican, in the fourth session of which the following Constitution was promulgated on the 18th of July, 1870:

“The eternal Pastor and Bishop of our souls, in order to continue for all time the life-giving work of His Redemption, determined to build up the Holy Church, wherein, as in the house of the living God, all who believe might be united in the bond of one faith and one charity. Wherefore, before He entered into the glory, He prayed unto the Father, not for the apostles only, but for those also who, through their preaching, should come to believe in Him, that all might be one, even as He, the Son, and the Father are one (St. John xvii. 21). As then, He sent the apostles whom He had chosen to Himself from the world, as He Himself had been sent by the Father, so He willed that there should ever be pastors and teachers in His Church to the end of the world. And in order that the episcopate also might be one and undivided, and that by means of a closely united priesthood, the multitude of the faithful might be kept secure in the oneness of faith and communion, He set blessed Peter over the rest of the apostles, and fixed in him the abiding principle of

(1) Cardinal Wiseman's Recollections of the Last Four Popes.

this two-fold unity and its visible foundation, in the strength of which the everlasting temple should arise, and the Church, in the firmness of that faith, should lift her majestic front to heaven. (1) And seeing that the gates of hell, with daily increase of hatred are gathering their strength on every side to upheave the foundation laid by God's own hand, and so, if that might be, to overthrow the Church, we, therefore, for the preservation, safe-keeping, and increase of the Catholic flock, with the approval of the Sacred Council, do judge it to be necessary to propose to the belief and acceptance of all the faithful, in accordance with the ancient and constant faith of the Universal Church, the doctrine touching the institution, perpetuity, and nature of the Sacred Apostolic Primacy, in which is found the strength and solidity of the entire Church, and at the same time to proscribe and condemn the contrary errors, so hurtful to the flock of Christ.

OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE APOSTOLIC PRIMACY IN BLESSED PETER.

“We, therefore, teach and declare that, according to the testimony of the Gospel, the primacy of jurisdiction over the Universal Church of God, was immediately and directly promised and given to Blessed Peter the Apostle, by Christ Our Lord. For it was to Simon alone, to whom He had already said: ‘Thou shalt be called Cephas’ (St. John i. 42), that the Lord after the confession made by him, saying: ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,’ addressed these solemn words: ‘Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven: And I say to thee that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will to thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven’ (St. Matt. xvi. 16–19). And it was upon Simon alone, that Jesus, after His resurrection, bestowed the jurisdiction of Chief

(1) St. Leo the Great (A. D. 440), Serm. IV., ch. 2. In diem Natalis. See Ed. Ballerini, Venice, 1753, Vol. I., p. 17. Read in Breviary Feb. 22 at Feast of St. Peter's chair at Antioch.

Pastor and Ruler over all His fold, in the words: 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep' (St. John xxi. 15-17). At open variance with this clear doctrine of Holy Scripture, as it has been ever understood by the Catholic Church, are the perverse opinions of those who, while they distort the form of government established by Christ the Lord in His Church, deny that Peter in his single person, preferably to all the other apostles, whether taken separately or together, was endowed by Christ with a true and proper primacy of jurisdiction; or of those who assert that the same primacy was not bestowed immediately and directly upon blessed Peter himself, but upon the Church, and through the Church on Peter as her minister.

"If any one, therefore, shall deny that Blessed Peter the Apostle was not appointed the Prince of all the Apostles, and the visible Head of the whole Church militant; or that the same directly and immediately received from the same, Our Lord Jesus Christ, a primacy of honor only, and not of true and proper jurisdiction, let him be anathema.

ON THE PERPETUITY OF THE PRIMACY OF BLESSED PETER IN THE
ROMAN PONTIFFS.

"That which the Prince of Shepherds and great Shepherd of the sheep, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, established in the person of the Blessed Apostle Peter, to secure the perpetual welfare and lasting good of the Church, must, by the same institution, necessarily remain unceasingly in the Church, which being founded upon the Rock, will stand firm to the end of the world. For none can doubt, and it is known to all ages, that the holy and blessed Peter, the Prince and Chief of the apostles, the pillar of the faith and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, and lives, presides, and judges to this day, and always, in his successors, the Bishops of the Holy See of Rome which was founded by Him and consecrated by His blood. (1) Whence, whosoever succeeds to Peter in this See,

(1) Acts Third Gen. Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431), Sess. iii. Labbe's Councils (Venice, 1728), Vol. III. p. 1154. St. Peter Chrysologus, Ep. ad Eutychem, Presbyt. (Opera, Venice, 1750), p. 13.

does by the institution of Christ himself, obtain the Primacy of Peter over the whole Church. The disposition made by Incarnate Truth therefore remains, and Blessed Peter, abiding through the strength of the Rock in the power that he received, has not abandoned the direction of the Church. (1) Wherefore, it has at all times been necessary that every particular Church—that is to say, the faithful throughout the world—should agree with the Roman Church, on account of the greater authority of the principdom which this has received; that all being associated in the unity of that See, whence the rights of communion spread to all, might grow together as members of one Head in the compact unity of the body. (2)

“If, then, any should deny that it is by the institution of Christ the Lord, or by divine right, that Blessed Peter should have a perpetual line of successors in the Primacy, over the Universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of Blessed Peter in this Primacy, let him be anathema.

OF THE POWER AND NATURE OF THE PRIMACY OF THE ROMAN
PONTIFF.

“Wherefore, resting on plain testimonies of the Sacred Writings, and adhering to the plain and express decrees, both of our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, and of the General Councils, we renew the definition of the Œcumenical Council of Florence, in virtue of which all the faithful of Christ must believe that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff possesses the primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and is true Vicar of Christ, and Head of the Whole Church, and Father and Teacher of all Christians; and that full power was given to him in Blessed Peter to rule, feed, and govern the Universal Church by Jesus Christ Our Lord, as is also contained in the Acts of the General Councils, and in the Sacred Canons.

“Hence we teach and declare that by the appointment of Our

(1) St. Leo the Great, *Serm.* III., ch. 3 (*Opera*, Vol. I., p. 12).

(2) St. Irenæus against Heresies, Bk. II., ch. 111, p. 175, Benedictine Edition, Venice, 1734. Acts of Synod of Aquileia, A.D. 381. Labbe's Councils, Vol. II., p. 185.

Lord, the Roman Church possesses a superiority of ordinary power over all other Churches, and that this power of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff, which is truly Episcopal, is immediate; to which all, of whatever rite or dignity, both pastors and faithful, both individually and collectively, are bound by their duty of hierarchical subordination, and true obedience, to submit, not only in matters which belong to faith and morals, but also in those that appertain to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the world; so that the Church of Christ may be one flock, under one supreme pastor, through the preservation of unity both of communion and of profession of the same faith with the Roman Pontiff. This is the teaching of Catholic truth from which no one can deviate without loss of faith and of salvation.

“But so far is this power of the Supreme Pontiff from being any prejudice to the ordinary and immediate power of Episcopal jurisdiction, by which bishops, who have been set by the Holy Ghost to succeed and hold the place of the apostles, (1) feed and govern each his own flock, as true pastors, that this their Episcopal authority is really asserted, strengthened, and protected by the supreme and universal pastor; in accordance with the words of Saint Gregory the Great: ‘My honor is the honor of the whole Church. My honor is the firm strength of my brethren. I am truly honored when the honor due to each and all is not withheld.’ ” (2)

“Further, from this supreme power possessed by the Roman Pontiffs, of governing the Universal Church, it follows that he has the right of free communication with the pastors of the whole Church, and with their flocks, that these may be taught and ruled by him in the way of salvation. Wherefore we condemn and reject the opinions of those who hold that the communication between this supreme Head and the Pastors and their flocks can lawfully be impeded; or who make this communication subject to the will of the secular power, so as to maintain that whatever is done by the Apostolic See, or by its authority, for the govern-

(1) Council of Trent, Of the Ecclesiastica Hierarchy, Sess. xxiii., ch. 4.

(2) St. Gregory the Great, Epist., Bk. VIII., 30. Bened. Ed. Paris, 1705, Vol. II., p. 919.

ment of the Church, can not have force or value unless it be confirmed by the assent of the secular power. And since, by the divine right of Apostolic Primacy, the Roman Pontiff is placed above the Universal Church, we further teach and declare that he is the supreme judge of the faithful, (1) and that in all causes, the decision of which belongs to the Church, recourse may be had to his tribunal; (2) and that none may reopen the judgment of the Apostolic See, the authority of which is greater than all other; nor can any lawfully review its judgment. (3) Wherefore, they err from the right course who assert that it is lawful to appeal from the judgments of the Roman Pontiffs to an Œcumenical Council, as to an authority higher than that of the Roman Pontiff.

“If, then, any shall say that the Roman Pontiff has the office merely of inspection or direction, and not full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the Universal Church, not only in things which belong to faith and morals, but also in those which relate to the discipline and government of the Church spread throughout the world; or assert that he possesses merely the principal part, and not all the fullness of this supreme power, or that this power which he enjoys is not ordinary and immediate, both over each and all the Churches, and over each and all the pastors and of the faithful; let him be anathema.

CONCERNING THE INFALLIBLE TEACHING OF THE ROMAN PONTIFF.

“Moreover, that the supreme power of teaching is also included in the apostolic primacy, which the Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, Prince of the Apostles, possesses over the whole Church, this Holy See has always held, the perpetual practice of the Church confirms, and also Œcumenical Councils have declared especially those on which the East, with the West, met in the union of faith and charity. For the Fathers of the Fourth Council of Constantinople, following in the footsteps of their predecessors, gave forth this solemn profession: ‘The first condi-

(1) Pope Pius VI., Brief *Super Soliditate*, 28 Nov., 1786.

(2) Acts of Gen. Council of Lyons (A.D. 1274); Labbe, Councils, Vol. XIV., p. 512.

(3) Ep. vii. of Pope Nicolas I. to the Emperor Michael (A.D. 858). Ib., Vol. IX., pp. 339, 1570.

tion of salvation is to keep the rule of the true faith. And because the sentence of our Lord Jesus Christ can not be passed by, who said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church" (St. Matt. xvi. 18), these things which have been said are approved by events; because in the Holy Apostolic See the Catholic religion and her holy and well-known doctrine has always been kept undefiled. Desiring, therefore, not to be in the least degree separated from the faith and doctrine of that See, we hope that we may deserve to be in the one communion, which the Apostolic See preaches, and in which is the entire and true solidity of the Christian religion.' (1) And with the approval of the second Council of Lyons, the Greeks professed that the Holy Roman Church enjoys supreme and full primacy, and pre-eminence over the whole Catholic Church, which it truly and humbly acknowledges that it has received, with the plenitude of power, from our Lord himself, in the person of Blessed Peter, Prince or Head of the Apostles, whose successor the Roman Pontiff is, and as the Apostolic See is bound before all others to defend the truth of faith, so also if any questions regarding faith shall arise, they must be defined by its judgment. (2) Finally, the Council of Florence defined, (3) 'that the Roman Pontiff is the true Vicar of Christ and the Head of the whole Church, and the Father and Teacher of all Christians; and that to him, in blessed Peter, was delivered, by our Lord Jesus Christ, the full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the whole Church' (St. John xxi. 15, 17).

"To satisfy this pastoral duty, our predecessors ever made unwearied efforts that the salutary doctrine of Christ might be propagated among all the nations of the earth, and with equal care watched that it might be preserved genuine and pure where it had been received. Therefore, the bishops of the whole world, now singly, now assembled in synod, followed the long-established custom of churches, (4) and the form of the ancient

(1) Formula of St. Hormisdas, subscribed by the Fathers of the 8th Gen. Council, 4th of Constantinople (A.D. 869). Labbé's Councils, Vol. V., pp. 583, 622.

(2) Acts 14th Gen. Council, 2d of Lyons (A.D. 1274). *Ib.*, Vol. XIV., p. 512.

(3) Acts 17th Gen. Council (Florence, 1438). *Ib.*, Vol. XVIII., p. 526.

(4) Ep. St. Cyril of Alexandria to Pope St. Celestine I. (A.D. 422. E. Paris, 1638, Vol. VI., part 2, p. 36.)

rule, (1) sent now to this Apostolic See of those dangers especially which sprang up in matters of faith, that there the losses of faith might be most effectually repaired where the faith can not fail. (2)

“And the Roman Pontiffs, according to the exigencies of times and circumstances, sometimes assembling Œcumenical Councils, or asking for the mind of the Church scattered throughout the world, sometimes by particular synods, sometimes using other helps which Divine Providence supplied, defined as to be held, those things which, with the help of God, they had recognized as conformable with the Sacred Scriptures and Apostolic Traditions. For the Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter, that by his revelation they might make known new doctrine, but that by his assistance they might inviolably keep, and faithfully expound, the revelation or deposit of faith delivered through the apostles. And, indeed, all the venerable Fathers have embraced, and the holy orthodox Doctors have venerated and followed their apostolic doctrine; knowing most fully that the See of holy Peter remains ever free from all blemish of error, according to the divine promise of the Lord our Saviour made to the Prince of His disciples: ‘I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren’ (3) (St. Luke xxii. 32).

“This gift, then, of truth and never-failing faith was conferred by heaven upon Peter, and his successors in this chair, that they might perform their high office for the salvation of all; that the whole flock of Christ, kept away by them from the poisonous food of error, might be nourished with the pasture of heavenly doctrine; that the occasion of schism being removed, the whole Church might be kept one, and, resting on its foundation, might stand firm against the gates of hell.

“But since in this very age in which the salutary efficacy of the apostolic office is most of all required, not a few are found

(1) St. Innocent I., Rescript to Council of Milevis (A.D. 402). Labbé, Ib. iii. p. 47.

(2) St. Bernard, Ep. to Pope Innocent II., 1230. Epist. 191. Opera (Paris, 1742), Vol. IV., p. 433.

(3) Acts 6th Gen. Council, A.D. 680. Abbé, Vol. VII., p. 659.

who take away from its authority, we judge it altogether necessary solemnly to assert the prerogative which the only begotten Son of God vouchsafed to join with the supreme pastoral office.

“Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, for the glory of God our Saviour, the exaltation of the Catholic religion, and the salvation of Christian people, the Sacred Council approving, We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: That the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*—that is, when, in discharge of the office of Pastor and Doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed, for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable (1) of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church.”

The whole structure of the Church, its government and mission, are thus indissolubly connected with the sacrament of Holy Orders. “What a complication of graces is implied in ordination,” says Faber, “and then, also, what a magnificence of powers! It is a manifold Sacrament. Its unity is a three-fold unity in Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—a shadow of unutterable divine grandeurs! It is, as it were, the sacred vessel in which the other six Sacraments are kept, and out of which they radiate their glory and their life.” (2)

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY.

ST. PAUL says: “I would that all men were even as myself;” that is, that all embraced the virtue of continence. In fact, if there be any one blessing superior to any other, it surely falls to

(1) In the words used by Pope Nicolas I. (ante), and in the Synod of Quedlinburg, A.D. 1085, “it is allowed to none to revise its judgment and to sit in judgment upon what it has judged.” Labbé, Vol. XII., p. 679.

(2) The Precious Blood, p. 292.

the lot of him who, unfettered by the distracting cares of the world, the turbulence of passion tranquilized, the unruly desires of the flesh extinguished, reposes in the practice of piety and the contemplation of heavenly things. But as, according to the same apostle, every one has his proper gift from God, one after this manner, another after that, and as marriage is gifted with many divine blessings, holding, as it does, a place amongst the Sacraments of the Church, it becomes our duty to describe, not only the dignity, but also the duties of the married state.

“How beautiful are the graces of the Sacrament of Marriage! Full of human tenderness, yet so softly insinuating the sovereign love of God; teeming with habitual self-sacrifice, yet filling the sacrifice with such sweetness, that it becomes not painless only, but a joy; breeding in young hearts such a gravity of new, heavenly duties, and yet flinging over life the lustre of an additional light; hardening the changeful heart with a supernatural preparation of perseverance, and yet softening every harshness, and making every sensitiveness more exquisitely keen; fortifying the soul with boldness to do right, at the very moment it is gracing it with all the bashful timidities of love; elevating affection into devotedness, and giving therewith a beautifulness of purity which is akin to the white innocence of virginity;—these are the graces of the Sacrament of Marriage, and they are all creations of the Precious Blood. They are all of them working daily in millions of hearts, hearts in sorrow, and hearts in joy; and their life is in the throbbing and pulsation of the Precious Blood.” (1)

If, before the Redeemer came, a wise man had been asked where this coming regenerator should pour most freely out his graces to renew and raise a fallen world, and train the coming generations to virtue, he would surely have said: “Upon marriage. Sanctify marriage, and, in the regenerate home, the new generations will be a blessing to earth.”

Society could not be regenerated but in its source. Divine Wisdom elevated the union of man and wife to be a Sacrament. He made a channel of graces for the individuals themselves, and for those to spring from them—Christian marriage, sacramental-

ized, reforming society, and, through it, the nations. At the unhappy revolt of the sixteenth century, which tore so many from the Church, paganism, reasserting itself, attacked Christian marriage. They spurned the Sacrament, and all that was supernatural. They descended to the natural, the animal. But practice was stronger than new doctrines. Woman, elevated by the Catholic Church, clung to what she could of the past; but, gradually, paganism gained ground till, now, States deny Christ, and deny His influence and graces in marriage, and decree that it must be heathenish. Can we wonder at the widespread misery that overflows the world, at the breaking up of all the family ties, at the looseness of thoughts and words in regard to that union on which society depends?

There is but one hope—the Catholic doctrine of the Sacrament of Matrimony. And Catholics should feel how much they have reason to thank God for this Sacrament, and how they should prize its graces.

The holy Council of Trent, even before that flood of iniquity had overflowed the world, thus defines the Catholic doctrine on the Sacrament of Matrimony:

“The first parent of the human race, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, pronounced the bond of Matrimony perpetual and indissoluble when he said: ‘This, now, is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. Wherefore, a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh’ (Gen. ii. 23, 24); but that by this bond two only are united and joined together, our Lord taught more plainly, when, rehearsing those last words as having been uttered by God, He said: ‘Therefore, now they are not two, but one flesh’ (St. Matt. xix. 6), and straightway confirmed the firmness of that tie, proclaimed so long before by Adam, by these words: ‘What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.’ But the grace which might perfect that natural love, and confirm that indissoluble union, and sanctify the married, Christ himself, the institutor and perfecter of the venerable Sacrament, merited for us by His passion, as the Apostle Paul intimates, saying: ‘Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the Church, and de-

livered himself up for it,' adding, shortly after: 'This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church' (Ephes. v. 25, 32). Whereas, therefore, Matrimony, in the evangelical law excels, in grace through Christ, the ancient marriages, with reason have our holy Fathers, the Councils, and the tradition of the universal Church, always taught that it is to be numbered among the Sacraments of the New Law, against which impious men of this age, raging, have not only had false notions touching this venerable Sacrament, but introducing, according to their wont, under the pretext of the Gospel, a carnal liberty, they have, by word and writing, asserted, not without great injury to the faithful of Christ, many things alien from the sentiment of the Catholic Church, and from the usage approved of since the times of the apostles."

Marriage, as a Sacrament, signifies the union of Christ with His Church; and as Christ never separates Himself from His Church, so a wife, as far as regards the tie of marriage, can never be separated from her husband, nor a husband from his wife. The bond of marriage can be dissolved by death alone. The principles of "free love" are condemned alike by natural and supernatural law. And it is to be sincerely regretted that no small number, even of Catholics, in the United States have become infatuated with the erroneous impression that the bond of matrimony can be totally severed in such manner as to allow those who are separated by divorce to enter upon a new marriage. Divorces granted by the civil authorities can never justify parties who were properly married to proceed to a new marriage.

Persons who intend to enter the holy state of Matrimony should present themselves before the priest who is to celebrate the marriage, in time to have the banns properly published, and inquiry made whether any impediments exist.

It is most in accordance with the intention of the Church, that Mass should be celebrated at the time of marriage; but this condition is too often omitted, and Catholics are often married, as it were, by stealth, in the evening; as though it were a crime, that needed the darkness to cover it, when it is in fact a glorious Sacrament, that should be received before God's altar in all the

glory of day. The Church provides even a special votive Mass, the *Missa pro Sponso et Sponsa*, a Mass of singular beauty, for the celebration of marriage; and when the Mass of a festival supersedes this Mass, its distinctive parts are introduced into the more solemn service.

The bride and bridegroom, with their friends, having taken their places near the altar (the bridegroom standing at the right hand of the bride), the priest, vested in surplice and white stole (over which he may wear a white or gold cope), proceeds with his attendants to the altar, where, after a short preliminary prayer, he turns to the bride and bridegroom, and interrogates them each as to their consent: "N., Wilt thou then take N., here present, for thy lawful wife, according to the rite of our Holy Mother, the Church?" When he answers, "I will," the priest puts a similar question to the bride. Then they join hands, and the priest says: "I join you together in marriage, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Then he sprinkles them with holy water. This done, the bridegroom lays the wedding-ring on the book, and the priest, after a few versicles and responses, prays: "Bless, O Lord, this ring, which we bless in Thy name, that she who shall wear it, keeping true faith unto her spouse, may abide in Thy peace and will, and ever live in mutual charity. Through Christ our Lord." The priest then sprinkles it with holy water, and gives it into the hand of the bridegroom, instructing him to say the words in which he declares that he weds the bride with that ring: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." As the bridegroom says "Amen," he should place the ring on her fourth finger. The priest then turns to the altar, and says certain versicles, with the *Kyrie eleison*, and Lord's prayer, and this prayer: "Look, O Lord, we beseech Thee, upon these Thy servants, and graciously assist Thine own institution, whereby Thou hast ordained the propagation of mankind, that they who are joined together by Thy authority may be preserved by Thy help. Through Christ our Lord."

THE NEW LAWS OF THE CHURCH CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND ENGAGE- MENTS TO MARRY.

Promulgated by authority of His Holiness Pope Pius X.

DECREE CONCERNING "SPONSALIA" AND MATRIMONY.

ISSUED BY THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF THE COUNCIL BY THE ORDER AND
WITH THE AUTHORITY OF OUR HOLY FATHER POPE PIUS X.

The Council of Trent, *cap. I, Sess. XXIV de reform. matrim.*, made prudent provision against the rash celebration of clandestine marriages, which the Church of God for most just reasons has always detested and forbidden, by decreeing: "Those who otherwise than in the presence of the parish priest himself or of another priest acting with the license of the parish priest or of the Ordinary, and in the presence of two or three witnesses, shall attempt to contract matrimony, the Holy Synod renders altogether incapable of contracting marriage thus, and decrees that contracts of this kind are null and void."

But as the same Sacred Council prescribed that the said Decree should be published in all the parishes and was not to have force except in those places in which it had been promulgated, it has happened that many places in which the publication has not been made have been deprived of the benefit of the Tridentine law, and are still without it, and continue to be subject to the doubts and inconveniences of the old discipline.

Nor has all difficulty been removed in those places where the new law has been in force. For often there has been grave doubt in deciding as to the person of the parish priest before whom a marriage is to be celebrated. The canonical discipline did indeed decide that he is to be regarded as the parish priest in whose parish one or other of the contracting parties has his or her domicile or quasi-domicile. But as it is sometimes difficult to judge whether a quasi-domicile really exists in a specified case, not a few marriages were exposed to the danger of nullity; many, too, either owing to ignorance or fraud, have been found to be quite illegitimate and void.

These deplorable results have been seen to happen more frequently in our own time on account of the increased facility and celerity of intercommunication between the different countries, even those most widely separated. It has therefore seemed expedient to wise and learned men to introduce some change into the law regulating the form of the celebration of marriage, and a great many bishops in all parts of the world, but especially in the more populous states where the necessity appears more urgent, have petitioned the Holy See to this end.

It has been asked also by very many bishops in Europe, as well by others in various regions, that provision should be made to prevent the

inconvenience arising from *sponsalia*, that is, mutual promises of marriage, privately entered upon. For experience has sufficiently shown the many dangers of such *sponsalia*, first as being an incitement to sin and causing the deception of inexperienced girls, and afterwards giving rise to inextricable dissensions and disputes.

Influenced by these circumstances, our Holy Father Pope Pius X desiring, in the solicitude he bears for all the churches, to introduce some modifications with the object of removing these drawbacks and dangers, committed to the S. Congregation of the Council the task of examining into the matter and of proposing to himself the measures it should deem opportune.

He was pleased also to have the opinion of the commission appointed for the codification of Canon Law, as well as of the Eminent Cardinals chosen on this special commission for the preparation of the new code, by whom, as well as by the S. Congregation of the Council, frequent meetings have been held for this purpose. The opinions of all having been taken, His Holiness ordered the Sacred Congregation of the Council to issue a Decree containing the laws, approved by himself on sure knowledge and after mature deliberation, by which the discipline regarding *sponsalia* and marriage is to be regulated for the future and the celebration of them carried out in a sure and orderly manner.

In execution, therefore, of the Apostolic mandate, the S. Congregation of the Council by these letters lays down and decrees what follows:

CONCERNING "SPONSALIA."

I. Only those are considered valid and produce canonical effects, which have been contracted in writing signed by both the parties and by either the parish priest or the Ordinary of the place, or at least by two witnesses.

In case one or both the parties be unable to write, this fact is to be noted in the document and another witness is to be added who will sign the writing as above, with the parish priest or the Ordinary of the place or the two witnesses.

II. Here and in the following article by parish priest is to be understood not only a priest legitimately presiding over a parish canonically erected, but in regions where parishes are not canonically erected the priest to whom the care of souls has been legitimately entrusted in any specified district and who is equivalent to a parish priest, and in missions where the territory has not yet been perfectly divided, every priest generally deputed by the superior of the mission for the care of souls in any station.

CONCERNING MARRIAGE)

III. Only those marriages are valid which are contracted before the parish priest or the Ordinary of the place or a priest delegated by either of these, and at least two witnesses, according to the rules laid down in the following articles, and saving the exceptions mentioned under VII and VIII.

IV. The parish priest and the Ordinary of the place validly assist at a marriage:

(i.) only from the day they have taken possession of the benefice or

entered upon their office, unless they have been by a public decree excommunicated by name or suspended from the office.

(ii.) only within the limits of their territory: within which they assist validly at marriages not only of their own subjects, but also of those not subject to them;

(iii.) provided when invited and asked, and not compelled by violence or by grave fear, they demand and receive the consent of the contracting parties.

V. They assist licitly:

(i.) when they have legitimately ascertained the free state of the contracting parties, having duly complied with the conditions laid down by the law;

(ii.) when they have ascertained that one of the contracting parties has a domicile, or at least has lived for a month in the place where the marriage takes place;

(iii.) if this condition be lacking, the parish priest and the Ordinary of the place, to assist licitly at a marriage, require the permission of the parish priest or the Ordinary of one of the contracting parties, unless it be a case of grave necessity, which excuses from this permission;

(iv.) concerning persons without fixed abode (*vagos*), except in case of necessity, it is not lawful for a parish priest to assist at their marriage, until they report the matter to the Ordinary or to a priest delegated by him and obtain permission to assist;

(v.) in every case let it be held as the rule that the marriage is to be celebrated before the parish priest of the bride, unless some just cause excuses from this.

VI. The parish priest and the Ordinary of the place may grant permission to another priest, specified and certain, to assist at marriages within the limits of their district.

The delegated priest, in order to assist validly and licitly, is bound to observe the limits of his mandate and the rules laid down above, in IV and V, for the parish priest and the Ordinary of the place.

VII. When danger of death is imminent and where the parish priest or the Ordinary of the place or a priest delegated by either of these cannot be had, in order to provide for the relief of conscience (and should the case require it) for the legitimation of offspring, marriage may be contracted validly and licitly before any priest and two witnesses.

VIII. Should it happen that in any district the parish priest or the Ordinary of the place or a priest delegated by either of them, before whom marriage can be celebrated, is not to be had, and that this condition of things has lasted for a month, marriage may be validly and licitly entered upon by the formal declaration of consent made by the spouses in the presence of two witnesses.

IX. (i.) After the celebration of a marriage the parish priest or he who is to take his place is to write at once in the book of marriages the names of the couple and of the witnesses, the place and day of the celebration of the marriage, and the other details, according to the method prescribed in the ritual books or by the Ordinary; and this even when another priest delegated either by the parish priest himself or by the Ordinary has assisted at the marriage.

(ii.) Moreover, the parish priest is to note also in the book of baptisms,

that the married person contracted marriage on such a day in his parish. If the married person has been baptized elsewhere, the parish priest who has assisted at the marriage is to transmit, either directly or through the episcopal curia, the announcement of the marriage that has taken place, to the parish priest of the place where the person was baptized, in order that the marriage may be inscribed in the book of baptisms.

(iii.) Whenever a marriage is contracted in the manner described in VI and VIII, the priest in the former case, the witnesses in the latter are bound conjointly with the contracting parties to provide that the marriage be inscribed as soon as possible in the prescribed books.

X. Parish priests who violate the rules thus far laid down are to be punished by their Ordinaries according to the nature and gravity of their transgression. Moreover, if they assist at the marriage of anybody in violation of the rules laid down in (ii.) and (iii.) of No. V, they are not to appropriate the stole-fees but must remit them to the parish priest of the contracting parties.

XI. (i.) The above laws are binding on all persons baptized in the Catholic Church and on those who have been converted to it from heresy or schism (even when either the latter or the former have fallen away afterwards from the Church) whenever they contract *sponsalia* or marriage with one another.

(ii.) The same laws are binding also on the same Catholics as above, if they contract *sponsalia* or marriage with non-Catholics, baptized or unbaptized, even after a dispensation has been obtained from the impediment *mixtae religionis* or *disparitatis cultus*; unless the Holy See decree otherwise for some particular place or region.

(iii.) Non-Catholics, whether baptized or unbaptized, who contract among themselves, are nowhere bound to observe the Catholic form of *sponsalia* or marriage.

The present decree is to be held as legitimately published and promulgated by its transmission to the Ordinaries, and its provisions begin to have the force of law from the solemn feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, next year, 1908.

Meanwhile let all the Ordinaries of places see that this decree be made public as soon as possible, and explained in the different parochial churches of their dioceses in order that it may be known by all.

These presents are to have force by the special order of our Most Holy Father Pope Pius X, all things, even those worthy of special mention, to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome on the 2nd day of August in the year 1907.

✠ VINCENT, Card. Bishop of Palestrina, Prefect.
C. DE LAI, Secretary.

Has Been found to conform with original text.

REMIGIUS LAFORT, S. T. L.,
Censor.

The Sacramentals

OR

Catholic Truth in Signs and Ceremonies.

SACRAMENTALS, like the Sacraments, have an outward sign or sensible element; but while the Sacraments were instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ himself, outward signs with an inward grace, the Sacramentals are, for the most part, of ecclesiastical origin, instituted by the Church in her great work for the renovation and salvation of man. They do not, of their own power, infuse grace into the soul, but they excite the soul to desires, through which it may obtain, from the gratuitous mercy of God, the special grace signified, or an increase of it.

In general terms, the Sacramentals include the prayers of the Church and the Blessings of the Church. The books containing these official prayers are :

The **MISSAL**, or Mass-Book. This contains the Ordinary of the Mass, which is the unalterable portion, and also the Introits, Collects, Epistles, Tracts, Graduals, Sequences, Epistles and Gospels, Offertories, Secrets, Prefaces, Communicantes, Communions, and Post-communions, for the various feasts and ferias of the ecclesiastical year.

The **BREVIARY**, or Office Book of the Church, with the **DIURNAL**, contains the Church prayers for the different hours of the day, according to the ancient division of time and the custom of the East. These are Matins; Lauds; Prime, so called from being said at the first hour; Tierce, said at the third hour; Sext, at the sixth; None, at the ninth; Vespers, or the Evening Service; and Complin, or the concluding service of the day. Each of these parts contains some of the psalms of David, with extracts from other parts of the Bible, or from the Fathers, or an account of the feast or saint honored on the day; canticles from the Scriptures, hymns, and prayers. The Breviary is divided into four parts, corresponding to the seasons—a division evidently of Jewish origin, as their prayer-books to this day are similarly divided.

Every priest is bound to recite each day the divine office, and in the older monastic orders it was chanted in choir.

Of these offices, Vespers is the only one in which the people now generally take part, on Sundays. It is composed of the 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, and 113th Psalms, a hymn, the Magnificat, or Canticle of the Blessed Virgin, from St. Luke, and the Collects. During Holy Week, the Matins and Lauds of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday are said publicly on the preceding evenings, instead of at midnight, and form the touching service known popularly as Tenebræ. Besides the general offices of the Breviary, there is the Office of the Dead, said by many out of devotion, especially in confraternities. A shorter office, known as the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, is also used in some religious orders and associations.

THE RITUAL is a book containing the form of administering many of the Sacraments, the funeral service, various benedictions and minor services; while those peculiar to bishops are given in the PONTIFICAL.

THE ITINERARY is a Church prayer of remarkable beauty. It opens with the Canticle of Zachary, father of St. John the Baptist, followed by this anthem: "In the way of peace and prosperity may the Lord, Almighty and merciful, direct our steps: and may the angel Raphael accompany us on the way, that we may return to our homes in peace, safety, and joy." Then follow the Kyrie, Lord's Prayer, and versicles, leading our thoughts from the ways of earth to the ways of salvation. "Show us Thy ways, O Lord." "And teach us Thy paths." "Oh that our ways were directed." "To keep Thy justifications." Then follows a prayer, which, after alluding to the passage of the Red Sea by the Children of Israel, and to the journey of the three Wise Men, proceeds: "Grant to us, we beseech Thee, a prosperous journey, and calm weather, that, attended by Thy holy angel, we may happily arrive at that place whither we are journeying, and finally at the haven of eternal salvation." Three other prayers follow, all full of beauty and unction, which no one can recite amid the vicissitudes of travel without a feeling of sweet confidence and trust.

THE FUNERAL SERVICE. It has been said of the Puritans of New England, that they were married and buried without the presence of a minister of religion. Such was not the thought of the Catholic Church. Every step in life finds her ready to bless, encourage, strengthen; and, after fortifying the soul for its last struggle, the Church waits to give the funeral rite her distinctive and touching character. Christian burial! Even over those who mock and disbelieve, it has a power; men who cut themselves off from the Church by their lives are anxious to have Christian burial. Let us examine the rite which seems to have such a hold on the minds of men who set all the laws and government of the Church at defiance, but yet—as has been seen in a neighboring province—invoke the mighty power of England to compel Catholic clergy, by force, to pronounce it over one of their number whose life, under the Council of Lateran, had cut him off from the fold.

In its full rite, the funeral service begins at the house of the departed. The priest, in surplice and black stole, before the body is borne out, sprinkles it with holy water, and intones the 129th Psalm, "*De Profundis*," which the Church has adopted as the cry of the departed. It closes, as do all in the service of the dead: "Eternal rest give them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine on them." The antiphon is the verse: "If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand?" Then the body is borne out, and when the priest pronounces the antiphon, the chanters begin the *Miserere* (Ps. 50). As they enter the church, the prayer of mercy gives place to one of hope, inspired by the house of God. The chanters intone the antiphon: "The bones that are humbled shall rejoice." Then: "Come to his assistance, ye saints of God; come forth to meet him, ye angels of the Lord, receiving his soul, offering it in the sight of the Most High." "May Christ receive thee, who called thee, and angels conduct thee to Abraham's bosom."

The corpse is placed in the middle of the church, with the feet to the altar, if a layman; but if a priest, with his head toward it. Tapers are lighted around the body. Then the Funeral Mass is said, after which the priest, taking off his chasuble and man-

iple, moves processionally to the coffin, the subdeacon, if one is present, leading with the cross, and taking his position at the head of the departed Christian, an acolyte on either hand bearing tapers, while the priest stands at the foot, with attendants bearing a censer and holy-water vessel. Then the priest begins. "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord! for in Thy sight shall no man be justified, unless through Thee the remission of all his sins be granted unto him. Let not, therefore, we beseech Thee, the sentence of Thy judgment weigh upon him whom the true supplication of Christian faith doth commend unto Thee; but, by the succor of Thy grace, may he merit to escape the judgment of vengeance, who, while he lived, was marked with the seal of the Holy Trinity: who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen."

Then, a chorister beginning, the clergy standing round chant the response:

"Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death, in that tremendous day: when the heavens shall be moved, and the earth: when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire. V. I am in fear and trembling, until the trial cometh, and the wrath to come. R. When the heavens shall be moved, and the earth: when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire. V. That day, a day of wrath, calamity, and misery; a day great and very bitter. R. When Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire. Eternal rest give unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. V. Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death, in that tremendous day: when the heavens shall be moved, and the earth: when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy." Then, repeating the prayer of our Lord, so often in life on the lips now cold in death, the priest sprinkles the lifeless body with holy water, and then incenses it. That body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, consecrated by the Sacraments, by chrism and holy oil, by the coming of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation, by the Body and Blood of the Word made Man. Then the priest prays: "From the gate of hell, deliver his soul, O Lord." "May he rest in peace. Amen." "O Lord, hear my prayer." "And let my cry come unto Thee." "The Lord be



MANIPLE WORN ON
THE ARM BY A
PRIEST AT MASS.

with thee" "And with thy spirit." "O God, whose property is always to have mercy and to spare, we humbly beseech Thee for the soul of Thy servant, which thou hast this day commanded to depart out of this world: that thou deliver it not into the hands of the enemy nor forget it unto the end: but command it to be received by the holy angels and conducted

into Paradise our true country; that, as it trusted and believed in Thee, it may not suffer the pains of hell, but attain unto everlasting joys." "Amen."

This is the prayer of Absolution, and, in



BISHOP'S MITRE.

the case of a deceased bishop, is given by several bishops in succession.

The body is then borne out, the choir chanting: "May the angels conduct thee into Paradise; at Thy coming may the martyrs receive thee, and lead thee to Jerusalem, the holy city. May the angelic choir receive thee, and with Lazarus, once a beggar, mayest thou have eternal rest."¹

On arriving at the grave, opened in consecrated ground, to receive the body of one who has died in the communion of the Church, the corpse is placed beside it; the priest again sprinkles and in-



CHASUBLE, (BACK VIEW.) WORN BY THE PRIEST AT
MASS.

censes the body and the grave, and recites the Canticle of Zachary: "Benedictus," followed by the antiphon: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live: and every one that liveth and believeth in me shall not die forever." The corpse has been lowered into the grave, and earth cast on it. Again the Kyrie resounds; again the Our Father is said, and, after some versicles and responses, comes the final prayer: "Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, this mercy unto thy servant deceased, that, having in intention kept Thy will, he may not suffer in requital of his deeds; but that, as, here, a true



A SURPLICE. WORN IN ADMINISTERING THE SACRAMENTS. PREACHING, ETC.



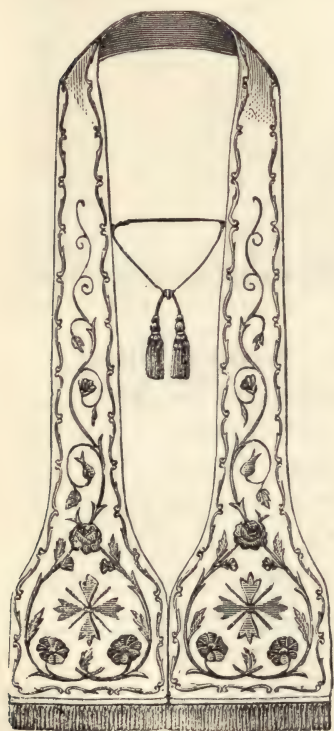
CHASUBLE. VESTMENT WORN BY THE PRIEST AT MASS.

faith joined him unto the company of the faithful, so, there, Thy

compassion may associate him with the choirs of angels, through Christ our Lord. Amen." "Eternal rest give unto him, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen." The grave is then filled up, and the priest, returning to the church, again re-



A COPE OR PLUVIALE. WORN BY BISHOPS AND PRIESTS AT BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, PROCESSIONS, ETC.



STOLE. USED IN PREACHING AND ADMINISTERING THE SACRAMENTS.

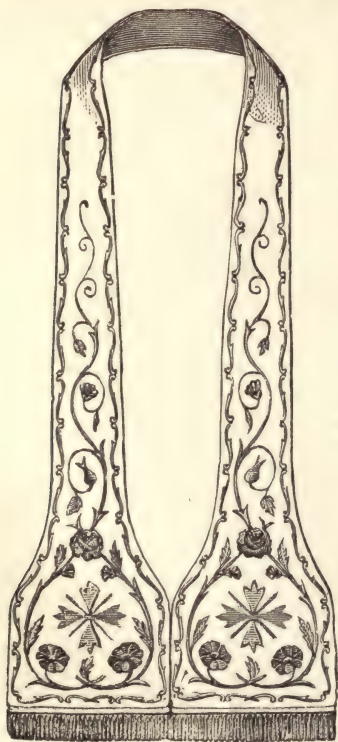
cites the "De Profundis."

Such is the burial service of those who have attained the age of reason, and entered on the spiritual combat—the warfare upon earth; but when the innocent child is to be buried, still wearing its baptismal robe of innocence, the service is entirely changed. The priest, in surplice and white stole, with no sign of mourning, sprinkles the corpse, and intones the 112th Psalm: "Praise, ye children, the Lord," followed by the 118th. At the church, the 23d Psalm, the triumphant entry of Jesus Christ into heaven, is said, followed by the Kyrie and Lord's

Prayer, with the versicle: "Thou hast upheld me by reason of my innocence, and hast established me in thy sight forever" (Ps. xl. 13). The prayer is as follows: "Almighty and most benignant God, who at once bestowest eternal life on all little children regenerated in the waters of Baptism, when they depart from this life, without any merits of theirs, as we believe Thee to have done to the soul of this little child to-day; grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, by the intercession of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and of



THE ALB. WORN BY THE PRIEST AT MASS,



STOLE. USED BY THE PRIEST AT MASS,

all Thy saints, to serve Thee here with purified minds, and to be associated in Paradise forever with the blessed little ones. Through Christ our Lord." Then the 148th Psalm is recited, with versicles and this prayer: "Almighty, eternal God, lover of holy purity, who hast this day mercifully vouchsafed to call the soul of this little child to the kingdom of heaven, vouchsafe also, O Lord, to deal mercifully with us:

that, by the merits of Thy most holy Passion, and the intercession of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and of all Thy saints Thou mayest make us ever rejoice in the same kingdom with all Thy saints and elect Amen." Then the body and grave are sprinkled and incensed.



BISHOP'S OIL STOCKS.
USED IN CONFIRMATION AND
ORDINATION.

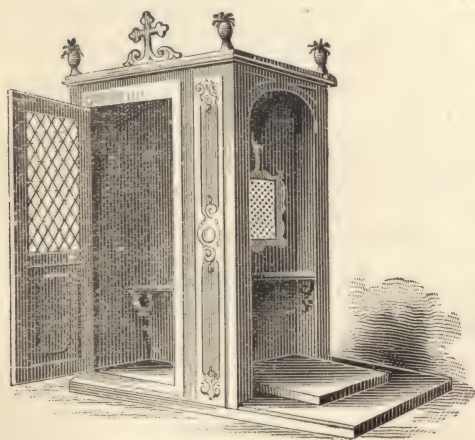
Returning from the grave, the priest recites the Cantic of the Three Children, with the Collect of the Holy Angels.

While for the mature we pray and mourn, in the case of children we rejoice: they need no prayers; their triumph is assured—their victory won. Praise and thanksgiving are the only offerings of our heart. Around such a coffin, the flowers of joy are strewn; but, alas! on ours, rue and wormwood would be more befitting.

Litanies. Among the prayers of the Church in common use by the faithful, are: the Litany of the Saints, an extremely ancient form of prayer, which was used as far back as the year 350; the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, which dates back to the primitive Church; the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, which has been long in use, but was not approved till our own times under Pius IX.

The Angelus. This beautiful devotion, enriched with many indulgences by the sovereign Pontiffs, was instituted to honor the Incarnation of the Son of God.

It is said at morning, noon, and night, and in Catholic countries the bell is rung to give notice of the time, and, in ages of faith, all labor and conversation was suspended to recite it. Its form is this: "The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, and she conceived by the Holy Ghost." Then the Hail Mary is recited: "Behold the handmaid of the



A CONFESSIONAL.

Lord, may it be done unto me according to Thy word." Then follows a second Hail Mary: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." A third Hail Mary, with the prayer: "Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection, through Christ our Lord. Amen." As faith in the Incarnation declined, this form of devotion became vital, and in our own day, when the spirit of anti-Christ, which denies that Jesus is the Son of God, prevails, Catholics should more assiduously cultivate this beautiful devotion.

Blessed Candles. We have alluded



A CENSER. USED FOR BURNING INCENSE.



CHRISMALE. FOR HOLDING HOLY CHRISM.

already to the use of candles in the Church service. The Jews connected lights with their public and private devotions. The lighting of the Sabbath lamp was a devotional act. That the Church used lights from the beginning we know by the attacks of heretics. As far back as the fourth century, Vigilantius attacked the use of lights in churches, and St. Jerome defended it. On Candlemas day, where the service calls our Lord, with holy Simeon: "A Light to the revelation of the Gentiles," the Church blesses candles for us children of the Gentiles, to hold while worshiping and acknowl-

edging Him who is our Light and the light of the world. These candles are then carried home ; and we place confidence in them, for the prayers of the Church have ascended to God that He would bless and sanctify them for the service of men and for the good of their bodies and souls in all places."

The Paschal Candle

is a large candle blessed with solemn rite on Holy Saturday. It is kept on the Epistle side of the altar, and lighted from the Eleva-

tion, from Easter during the Paschal season. It is mentioned as early as the year 417, as a thing already in use. We may light them in any danger or peril ; but, above all, let the holy candle burn beside the bed of the sick or dying Catholic, to

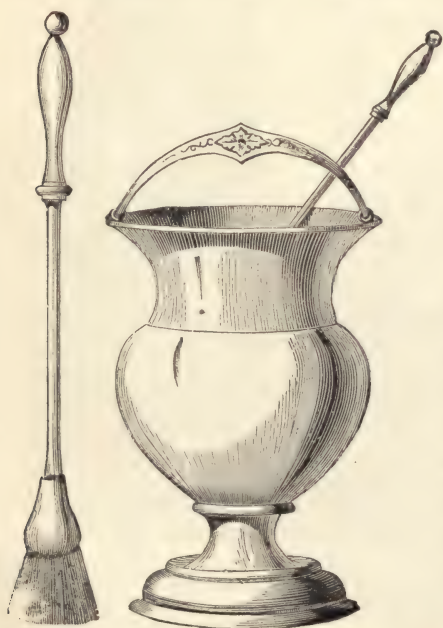
banish by its holy gleam the shades of trouble and doubt that may assail the soul in its last hour. The candle was placed in our hands at baptism ; the blessed candle should be at our hand in death.

Blessed or Holy Water.

Holy Water entered into the ceremonial of the Old Law, and the very term is used in Numbers v. 17, in all versions. A sacred laver of water stood between the altar and the tabernacle : there was a water of expiation ; a water of jealousy ; and there were sprinklings appointed. The custom of blessing water

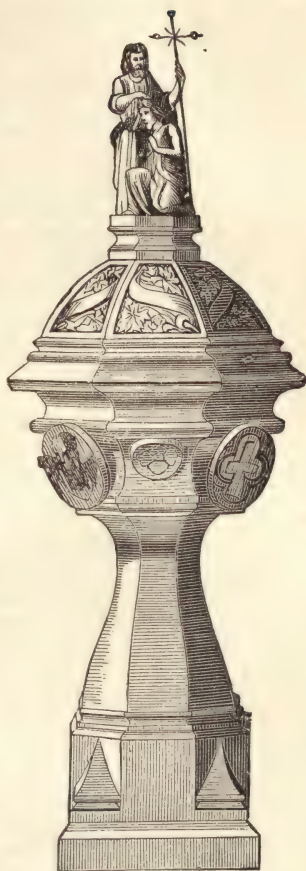


CRUETS. FOR WINE AND WATER AT MASS, WITH TRAY.



HOLY WATER POT AND SPRINKLE.

for the use of the faithful is very ancient. As far back as the year 109-119, Pope St. Alexander I. speaks of it as an established custom—so that it must have been coeval with the establishment of Christianity. There are three kinds of holy water: Baptismal water, blessed on Holy Saturday; Pontifical water, blessed by a bishop and used in consecrating churches or reconciling churches which have been profaned; common holy water, which a priest may bless. In the ritual for blessing it, water and salt (the symbol of wisdom) are both exorcised before being blessed. Beautiful prayers are then recited to express the spiritual effects which the Church wishes them to produce, and which, in virtue of her benediction, they will produce, unless the unworthy dispositions of the faithful prevent. As we have seen, the Church uses holy water in nearly all her benedictions, and in many of the Sacraments; she places it at the door of her temples, that all who enter the courts of the Lord, or depart from them, may use it.



BAPTISMAL FONT.



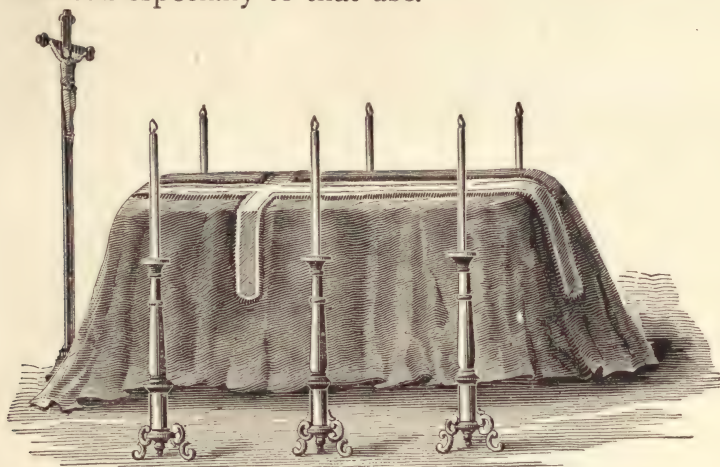
OIL STOCKS. CONTAIN-
ING OIL AND CHRISM
FOR BAPTISM AND
EXTREME UNCTION.



VEIL. USED AT BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.—PAGE 409.

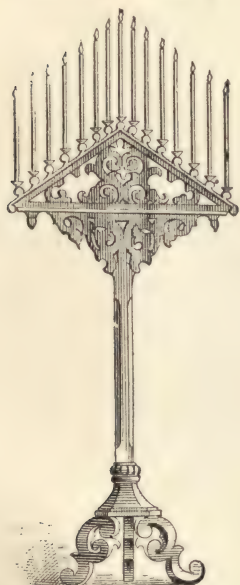
For use in the trials of life, before prayer, in sickness, and especially when the priest is to come to administer the Sacra-

ments, we should always have holy water in our houses, in a vessel devoted especially to that use.

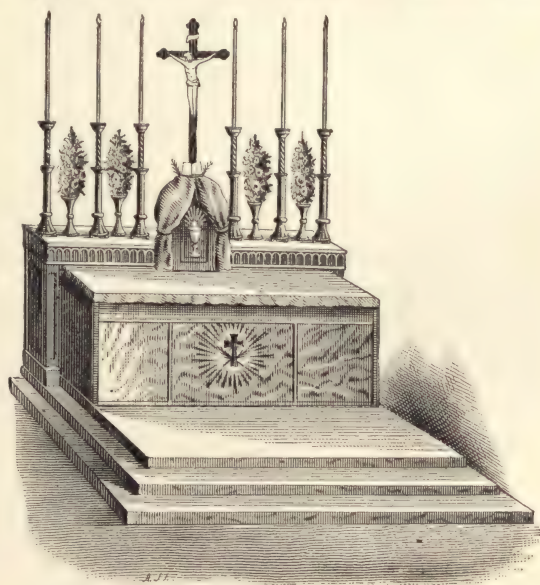


COFFIN. COVERED WITH THE PALL AT REQUIEM MASS.

Holy Ashes. On Ash Wednesday the Church blesses ashes, and puts them on the forehead of her children, to remind them that they are only dust and ashes. The palms blessed on Palm Sunday in the preceding year are burned ; and the ashes, blessed,



TRIANGLE, WITH CANDLES, USED AT TENEBRÆ IN HOLY WEEK.



ALTAR. AS PRESCRIBED BY THE CEREMONIAL.

are put on the foreheads of the faithful by the priest, saying: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, unto dust thou shalt return."

The Cross and the Crucifix.—Sign of the Cross. The cross, as the copy of that on which our Lord died, was an object of reverence from the first, and was made on the person with the words: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The crucifix, a cross with the effigy of our Lord nailed to it, was introduced when idolatry was overthrown. In the service of the Church, special honor is paid to the crucifix on



A PRIEST PUTTING ON THE CINCTURE OR GIRDLE OVER THE ALB.

Good Friday. She places the cross on the spires, which show that she looks up to heaven; she places the crucifix above her altar, and in the hands of her dying children; she makes the sign of the cross at all times. The sign of the cross, which begins all prayers and devotions, is made by drawing the hand from the forehead to the breast and then from the left to the right shoulder. How old the usage is, may be seen in Tertullian, who, writing in the second century, says: "At every step and movement, whenever we come in or go out, when we dress and put on our shoes, at bath, at table, when lights are brought in, on lying or sitting down—whatever employment engages our attention,

we make the sign of the cross upon our foreheads." The Church encourages the use of crucifixes by indulgences conferred on those who devoutly use those blessed with that view. The cross is, in a special manner, the symbol of our faith, and should be the pride of every Catholic. It is the sign of the Son of man, which none should blush at or be ashamed of unless he wishes Jesus Christ to be ashamed of him at the last day. Nor was it without design that this, of all instruments of punishment used by man, is the only one that could be introduced into architecture and art — the only one to be readily grasped in the hands of the dying, or to glitter in the diadem of kings.

Connected with the cross are two feasts of the Church: the invention (*i. e.*, Finding) of the Holy Cross, celebrated on the 3d of May, to commemorate the discovery of the True Cross at Jerusalem, by the Empress Saint Helena, mother of Constantine the Great; and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, celebrated on the 14th of September, to commemorate



A PRIEST PUTTING ON THE AMICE OR AMICT.

the recovery of the True Cross from Chosroes, king of Persia, by the Emperor Heraclius, and its solemn restoration and exaltation on Mount Calvary.

The Stations, or Holy Way of the Cross is a universal devotional exercise, in which the Passion, Death, and Sepulture of the Son of God pass before us in a series of fourteen pictures; and in which the faithful meditate upon them, passing from station to station, in memory of His sad and bitter passage from the tribunal of Pilate to the tomb. Constant tradition attests, that from the very first, devotion led the followers of our Lord to tread that path, and bedew with their tears and prayers the Way which He had hallowed with His precious blood. As the Church spread, pilgrims came from afar to perform the same devotion. When in time Jerusalem fell into the hands of infidels, so that it was unsafe for many to venture thither, the

Franciscan Fathers, to whom especially the guardianship of the holy places was assigned, began to set

up in their churches in Europe, fourteen crosses, with as many pictures, representing the various stages of that dolorous Way, that the faithful, meditating before them, might in spirit accompany the pilgrims to Jerusalem on their way to Calvary. This devotion was a great consolation to the pious, who could step out of the busy world into the quiet church, and pass from station to station, meditating sweetly on all that a loving Saviour had undergone, thus learning from His example deepest lessons of submission to God's will, patience, long-suffering, charity, forgiveness, humility.



CHALICE AND PATEN.



A CIBORIUM. IN WHICH THE
CONSECRATED HOSTS ARE
KEPT.

This devotion is often performed in the penitential times of Lent and Advent; and crosses are specially blessed to enable those prevented by illness from performing the devotion before stations canonically set up, to obtain the same spiritual favors by going through the devotion in their own homes.

Leo XIII and the Holy Rosary.—Leo XIII, so justly called the Pope of the Holy Rosary, has elevated this devotion to a higher degree than any of his predecessors. He has issued no less than fourteen encyclicals and decrees in commendation of this excellent form of prayer. During the past half century this devotion has become more popular among



ONE OF THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS.



THE CEREMONY OF CONFERRING THE PALLIUM ON AN ARCHBISHOP.

encouraging it by his repeated encyclicals, making it the matter of daily devotional exercises every

Catholics than ever before. This has been brought about by confraternities of the Rosary, and by the practice known as the living Rosary and the perpetual Rosary. Nothing, however, has so much favored the devotion of the Rosary as the action of our Holy Father in

October, granting special indulgences for attending these exercises, raising the grade of the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary, appointing for it a proper Mass and office, and adding to our Lady's titles in the Litanies that of "Queen of the Most Holy Rosary."



BISHOP'S
CROSIER.

In fact, so popular has the devotion of the Rosary ever been in the Church, that some speak of it as they would speak of devotion to our Lady in whose honor the Rosary is recited. What is new about this title is that Leo XIII has decreed that it should be inserted in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, an enactment of far greater import than the addition of



ARCHEPISCOPAL CROSS. CARRIED IN PROCESSION
BEFORE AN ARCHBISHOP.

a new title to those of an earthly queen or empress. It means that our Lady's latest honor is our devotion to her Rosary, and that this has become so widespread and so well established as a practice of the Church that it sufficiently expresses a universal tribute of esteem to make it a common title under which Catholics all over the world can address her. It means further that, by the recital of the Rosary, the faithful generally have had enough proof of our Lady's power to attribute to



OSTENSORIUM OR MONSTRANCE, IN WHICH THE
CONSECRATED HOST IS PLACED IN THE
BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT.

the great mystery of our religion, the Incarnation of the Son of God. It makes us realize what this mystery means for us, that Christ became really man. It does this by impressing on us that He was born of woman as we are, and that He is, therefore, flesh and blood like ourselves. It is God's own way of reaching our minds through our hearts. The argument is all in the one word mother, and in the fact that this one word expresses so well, *viz.*, the fact that to be with us and one of us the Son of God took flesh and was born

her the name of Queen with the special title to our devotion in this favorite way.

It is not strange then that so many means have been devised for inducing the faithful to take up this practice, or that such rich indulgences should have been bestowed upon it. Even were it vastly more difficult, were it less blessed with indulgences, had we never experienced its efficacy, or had we no special needs or favors to ask for, its very simplicity and beauty and the great help it gives to our faith and to our religious spirit should make us eager to cultivate it and to make it a daily custom. It brings home to us in the most homely way

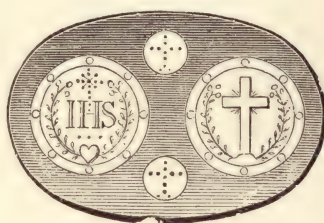


PASCHAL
CANDLESTICK
AND CANDLE

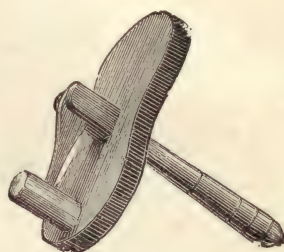
of the Virgin Mary, full of grace, blessed among women and blessed in the fruit of her womb, Jesus.



PYXIS. FOR CARRYING
THE BLESSED SACRA-
MENT TO THE SICK.



LARGE AND SMALL HOSTS. FOR CON-
SECRATION.



CLAPPER FOR HOLY WEEK.

Devotion is a gift that we can cultivate once we have obtained it, but which must come in the first instance freely from the hands of God. It is, in its general sense, any increase of faith, hope, and charity, or, what is the same, any renewal or advance in a disposition to serve God, any readiness to do his will, any strengthening of the ties that bind us to Him.



BREAD IRONS. USED IN BACKING THE LARGE AND SMALL HOSTS.

The superiority of the Rosary over other forms of prayer consists in the fact that God himself is the author of the mysteries and the vocal prayers of the Rosary. The contemplation and the meditation of the fifteen principal mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ add to the prayers of the Rosary a great perfection. By the vocal prayers of the Rosary we speak to God; by contemplation and meditation God speaks to us.

THE ROSARY. There is no devotion not connected with the Liturgy or Office of the Church which has been more widely extended, or been taken up, age after age, by persons of every rank and station than the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin. In its present form it was instituted by the great Saint Dominic de Guzman, the founder of the Order of Friars Preachers. But it grew out of a devotion older than Christianity, and a mode of prayer that dates back to a very early period. The Psalms of David were in constant use as prayers among the Jews; the primitive Christians adopted them, and the pious, as well as all who, as hermits or monks, sought religious perfection, recited the whole hundred and fifty psalms daily. Of this there are constant proofs in the early ages. Some, who could not read and were too dull to remember so much, were allowed to recite, instead, the Lord's Prayer the same number of times; later, the Angelical Salutation was substituted for the Lord's Prayer. To keep the record of these prayers, belts or strings of beads were used; in fact, our word bead is from the same source as the German *beten*, and means to pray.

That the mind should not be unoccupied during the recital of these prayers, the Life of our Lord and His Blessed Mother was commended as a matter of meditation. Saint Dominic divided the hundred and fifty beads into three parts, each containing five decades of ten beads, and assigned to each part five mysteries of the life of our Lord. The Joyful Mysteries were the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity of our Lord, His Presentation in the Temple, and His Finding in the Temple. The Sorrowful Mysteries, forming the second part, included His Bloody Sweat, His Scourging, His Crowning with Thorns, the Carriage of the Cross, His Crucifixion. The Glorious Mysteries, which were the subject of the third part, were the Resurrection of our Lord, His Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, His Assumption of His Blessed Mother into Heaven, and her Coronation. The division was simple, easily grasped, full of pious thought, and kept before the people the chief events in the history of our Redemption. It became the

NOTE.—For colors of vestments herein shown see Encyclopedic-Dictionary.

general devotion in all countries of Europe, and the rosary was said by all, from the king on his throne to the leper and beggar.

The full fifteen decades form a rosary; that in general use, called a chaplet or pair of beads, consists of five decades, each of a large bead for the Our Father and ten smaller ones for the Hail Marys; where the ends join, the chain is continued by three small beads and two larger, a crucifix or medal being attached to the end. These are for introductory prayers, the Creed, Our Father, and three Hail Marys, with a Glory be to the Father, etc. These form no part of the rosary properly so called.

It is usual, when the rosary is said in public, to call the several mysteries to mind by a few preliminary words. When the rosary is said with others, the leader or person saying it, who need not even be a cleric, recites half of each prayer, and the rest recite the other half. After the five decades are said, it is usual to sing or recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Saint Dominic, who had labored almost in vain to convert the Albigenses, had no sooner introduced this devotion than a change was at once seen. Hearts that no arguments could move were attracted by this devotion; the work of conversion was rapid. St. Dominic reaped a harvest of souls, and the Blessed Virgin a harvest of glory.

From that day to this the devotion of the rosary has never lost its hold on the affections of the faithful. It became the prayer in which they were gathered together for general or particular wants. When Europe was menaced by the Turks the rosary was said with fervor, and while the Sodality of the Rosary were walking in solemn procession through the streets of Rome, praying for victory to the Christian army, the battle was raging at Lepanto, October 7, 1571, and the Turkish power on the seas was broken forever. It was not the band of men that broke the power which had so long threatened Europe; it was the hand of God, put forth in answer to the prayers of the Confraternity of the Rosary.

The reigning Pontiff, St. Pius V., in gratitude for so signal a favor, ordered the first Sunday in October to be observed as an

annual commemoration in the Church of St. Mary of Victory; this feast was extended to other churches and countries by other Popes, till at last, after another victory, Clement XI., in 1716, made the Festival of the Rosary a feast for the universal Church.

There are few devotions to which the Holy See has granted so many indulgences as to the rosary: one hundred days for each Our Father and Hail Mary, and a plenary indulgence once a year to those who approach the Sacrament of Penance, receive Holy Communion, and pray for the wants of the Church. To gain these indulgences, the beads must be blessed by a priest who has received faculties from the Pope, and the person must say the rosary, meditating on the mystery assigned to each decade.

Besides the Confraternity of the Rosary, another has been established in this century. This is the Confraternity of the Living Rosary. In this, five persons are associated, each saying one decade each day, so that the five say the whole chaplet; two similar bands, with them, will thus recite the whole rosary daily. This is called the Living Rosary, and the fruits produced by it have been so great and manifest, that the holy Fathers have enriched it with many indulgences.

Nothing should deter Catholics from adhering to a devotion so holy, so consoling. Many, indeed, think it one for the ignorant only; but this is a grave error. Meditation on the life of our Lord is something to occupy the most exalted and most cultivated minds, and give them light and strength. The example of officers in the army and navy, who faithfully adhered to this pious practice, would alone suffice to show that the greatest ability and learning are found among the faithful adherents to this devotion, which is, in itself, an almost certain test of real Catholicity.

THE SCAPULAR OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL. This is another widespread devotion among Catholics, in honor of the Blessed Virgin. Its origin and meaning need some explanation. As religious orders spread in the Church, and gathered into cloisters and convents many who were called by God to the way of perfection, by the practice of the evangelical counsels, they, in turn, exerted an influence on the pious among the laity,

many of whom were, by marriage, or the duties of their state of life, unable to devote their lives to God's service in religious orders, and who had, in fact, not been called by Providence to that state. Still piety led them to desire to be associated with the holy religious whom they revered. Hence sprang up forms of affiliation, to satisfy the piety of the faithful. The Franciscans have a third order, instituted by their seraphic founder himself, for persons living in the world, who receive a habit, and follow the rule modified to suit their condition in life. Then, too, they instituted the Confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis—not an order, but a simple association, without the obligations attached to the third order. This confraternity, like the third order, has been approved by many Popes, and indulgences have been granted to the members.

The Dominicans have also their third order, and similar confraternities; but while the affiliations of these two orders, sharing in the prayers, masses, labors, and austerities of the Sons of St. Francis and St. Dominic, have numbered thousands, the confraternity connected with the order of Friars of our Lady of Mount Carmel numbers its associates among the faithful by millions and has them in all lands; so that it has become, we may say, less a confraternity than a general devotion. The order of Mount Carmel, claiming in a manner descent from the Prophets Elias and Eliseus and their disciples, received a rule from the Blessed Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the year 1209; and, after its approbation by the Holy See, the order spread over Western Europe. One of the most illustrious generals of this order was Saint Simon Stock, an Englishman, noted for his tender piety, and his devotion to the Blessed Virgin. His piety was rewarded by a vision, in which she appeared to him, and handed to him the brown scapular, similar in color and material to that worn by his order, promising special graces to those who should wear it devoutly. The new devotion was not adopted without examination; the facts were submitted to learned theologians, and evidence that would convince any jury of reasonable men convinced these pious and learned men that the vision was authentic. The Sovereign Pontiffs authorized

the use of this new devotion. The fruits of salvation that attended it proved the finger of God was really there, and it was encouraged, not only by grants of indulgences, but by the establishment of a festival in honor of Our Lady, under this title.

"The advantages which we derive from wearing the scapular are three-fold: It puts us under the particular protection of Mary; it makes us participants in all the good works of the Carmelite order; and places within our reach numerous indulgences." (1)

To participate in the benefits of the confraternity, it is necessary to be received into it by a priest duly empowered. He delivers to the new member a scapular, consisting of two pieces of brown woolen cloth connected by bands, which he blesses. This must be worn so that the ends are on the breast and back, and must be worn constantly. If the first one is worn out or lost, another can be obtained, when needed, and will not require to be blessed. There is a plenary indulgence granted to each one on the day he enters the confraternity, and at the hour of death and every year on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, as well as many partial indulgences.

THE SCAPULAR OF THE PASSION AND OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY.

This scapular has, on one side, the figure of our Lord on the Cross, surrounded by the instruments of His Passion; and, on the other side, the hearts of Jesus and Mary. This scapular arose from a series of visions to a Sister of Charity, and was approved by Pope Pius IX., in 1847.

THE SCAPULAR OF THE SACRED HEART.

Of the more recent scapulars, one of the most cherished is the Scapular of the Sacred Heart, to which the pilgrimages have given a great impulse. It may be said to have originated with the Holy Father, Pope Pius IX., himself. A Roman lady of great piety having made a scapular of this kind, presented it her-

(1) The Sacramentals of the Holy Catholic Church, or Flowers from the Garden of the Liturgy, by Rev. William J. Barry; an excellent work, which we have used freely in this portion of our subject.

self to the Sovereign Pontiff. Taking it in his hand, he reflected for a moment, and then said: "Madame, this is a thought from heaven;" and, after a little further reflection, he added: "With all my heart I bless this little Heart, and I will that all those which may be made after this model, shall receive my blessing, without it being necessary for any other priest to give it. Moreover, I will that in no ways shall the devil have power to hurt those who shall wear this little Heart." He then directed the following prayer to be written, and to be used especially in time of calamity:

"Open to me Thy Sacred Heart, O Jesus! show me its charms, and unite me with it forever; may every breath and every pulsation of my heart, which cease not during my sleep, be to Thee a testimony of my love, and say to Thee unceasingly: 'Yes, Lord, I love Thee.' Accept the little good I do; grant me grace to repair my evil ways, that I may praise in time, and bless Thee for all eternity."

CRUCIFIXES, MEDALS, AND CROSSES

are blessed by priests having the faculty, and those who wear them piously obtain, under the grants of the Sovereign Pontiffs, numerous indulgences. One of these medals, that has a world-wide fame among Catholics, is the medal of the Immaculate Conception, which bears, on one side, the Blessed Virgin, represented under that title, with the words: "Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us," and on the other, the monogram "A. M.," surmounted by a cross and surrounded by stars. This medal owes its origin to a holy Sister of Charity, and the graces obtained by the devout wearers of it, especially in connection with the recitation of the Memorare, have won for it the common title of Miraculous Medal, by which it is generally known. The sudden and remarkable conversion of Ratisbonne, at Rome, through this medal, is one of the most authentic and indisputable miracles of our times.

The favors obtained through the use of other medals, such as those of St. Benedict, St. Ignatius, etc., are well authenticated, and should inspire confidence.

HOLY OILS. We have seen the frequent use made by the Church of the holy oils in her administration of the Sacraments. These oils are of three kinds: the Oil of the Sick, Chrism, and the Oil of the Catechumens. Chrism is used in the ceremonies of Baptism, as well as in the preparation of baptismal water; in Confirmation; at the consecration of a bishop, and likewise of churches, altars, and chalices; and in the consecration of church bells. The Oil of the Catechumens is used in Baptism, in the preparation of baptismal water, the ordination of priests, and the coronation of sovereigns. The Oil of the Sick is the sacramental matter of Extreme Unction, and is used in no other rite, except the consecration of church bells, which toll for the passing soul. These holy oils are blessed by a bishop or archbishop on Maundy Thursday, for use during the ensuing year. The use of oil in consecrating persons and things to God's service was expressly enjoined in the Old Law (Ex. xxx.); and our Lord's name, Christ, means in Greek, the Anointed. The Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens are olive oil; but, in Chrism, balsam is added. The olive is the symbol of peace, and it is connected with our thoughts of the eve of our Saviour's passion in the Garden of Olives.

BLESSED PALM. In commemoration of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when the people strewed palms in the way, the Church, on the Sunday before the commemoration of His death, blesses branches of palm; it is, too, a sign of victory, and should be the symbol of our victory over sin. We should receive the blessed palm, to show our fidelity to Jesus Christ, and as a protest that we will not, like the Jews, soon turn against Him; but keep it as a pledge of our fidelity and of the crown to which we aspire.

The **AGNUS DEI** is a cake of wax, bearing on it the image of a lamb surmounted by the cross. It is blessed by the Pope, on the Low Sunday after his elevation to the See of Peter, and on every seventh Low Sunday. The use of it, among the faithful, is very ancient. The blessings attached to the Agnus Dei are enumerated in the prayer of the Pope. "O God, author of all sanctity, Lord and ruler, whose fatherly love and care we ever

experience, deign to bless, sanctify, and consecrate, by the invocation of Thy Holy Name, these cakes of wax, stamped with the image of the most innocent Lamb, that, by seeing and touching them, the faithful may be invited to praise Thee; that they may escape the fury of whirlwinds and tempests and danger from hail and thunder; that the evil spirits may tremble and fly when they behold the standard of the sacred cross impressed on the wax." And he prays that all who devoutly use the Agnus Dei may be freed from pestilence, shipwreck, fire, from the dangers of childbirth, and sudden death. It should be worn devoutly, in the belief that the prayer of the Vicar of Our Lord avails much. The prayer usually said with it is as follows: "O my Lord Jesus Christ, the true Lamb, that takest away the sins of the world! by Thy mercy, which is infinite, pardon my iniquities; and by Thy sacred passion preserve me this day from all sin and evil. I carry about me this holy Agnus Dei in Thy honor, as a preservative against my own weakness, and as an incentive to the practice of meekness, humility, and innocence, which Thou hast taught. I offer myself up to Thee as an entire oblation, and in memory of that sacrifice of love which Thou offerdest for me on the cross, and in satisfaction for my sins. Accept, O my God, the oblation I make, and may it be agreeable to Thee in the odor of sweetness. Amen."

BLESSINGS. The Church has blessings for all that man lawfully has or uses. She blesses the church in which he worships God; she blesses the altar, vestments, altar vessels—all that is connected with the worship in that temple where he is baptized and receives many of the other Sacraments in life—where he is brought after death; she blesses the grave in which he is to lie; she blesses the house in which he dwells; the ship or railroad by which he travels; the field he tills, and the food he enjoys. They all come from God, and the Church asks His blessing that all may conduce to his salvation. And still more does she bless rosaries, pictures, crosses, and medals, that serve to keep alive his faith and piety. Some of these forms of benediction are full of beauty, especially the solemn rites, such as the Blessing of a Corner-stone, or the Dedication of a Church.

READINGS FOR EACH SUNDAY IN THE YEAR.



The Catholic Mother to Her Children

By The Countess de Flavigny

Designed to implant in the receptive minds of the young a love of their Faith and a knowledge of their duties.

These readings comprise one for each Sunday in the year, and the days of Holy Week. Those for Sunday reading are not prepared with reference to the Gospel of the day. They embrace simple and familiar lessons for childhood on ordinary duties and those common Christian virtues that cannot be too early instilled into the heart of youth.

Originally published under the approbation of His Grace the Archbishop of Paris, and adopted by the University, and endorsed by the Cardinal, Archbishop of Tours, and the late Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Westminster.

FIRST LESSON.

On Time: The Motives, and the Means for Employing It well.

“Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly ; for neither work nor wisdom shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening.” Eccles. ix o

AMONG the many motives which should induce us to employ our time well, the first is its inestimable value. For, it is a most

precious gift of God—a gift upon which we cannot set too high a value, and the loss of which is irreparable. That time, which we are apt to esteem so little, and to squander away so lavishly in vain, unprofitable, and even sinful pursuits, is far more valuable than all the treasures of gold and silver, and rich estates—than all the kingdoms of this world. For, by the good management of time, we can lay up treasures for eternity—we can purchase a kingdom, which shall never have an end.

If we had a true idea of time—if we knew how to estimate its value, as justly as those unhappy souls do, who are now suffering in the flames of hell, we should not need to be admonished of its value, nor exhorted to employ it well. They see now the real worth of time : but it is too late ! They neglected to profit by it while they had the means and the opportunity of doing so ; but they lament the sad consequence of their folly, now that they are overtaken by that dismal night of eternity, “ wherein no man can work.” (*John ix. 4.*)

Time is still left in our hands ; yet we know not how soon that awful moment will arrive, which is to deprive us forever of this precious treasure ; and which, unless we are careful to husband well our time, will hurry us before our Judge, only to receive from Him the punishment due to our negligence !

Therefore, from the unhappy failure of others, let us learn to set a just value on the time allowed us by Almighty God, and let us learn, moreover, to labor “earnestly,” whilst it is in our power, to lay up, by means of good works, a rich store of merits for eternity ; that so, instead of being cast off and punished for our slothfulness, we may deserve the reward which God promises to those who are diligent in His service. Our time is given us that we may employ it in promoting God’s glory and our own salvation, until an account of it shall be demanded from us. Let us take care, then, that we do not, like the slothful servant, bury

NOTE.—Lessons Twenty-two, Twenty-three, Twenty-four, Twenty-six, Twenty-eight and Thirty, from the pen of Rev. W. H. Anderdon, S. J., and Nos. One, Fifty-three, Fifty-four and Fifty-six from that of Rev. John Perry, were designed by the authors for family reading, and were added by the Editor.

our talent ; for, if we do, we must expect to be " cast (with him) into the exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." But let us be very earnest in imitating the faithful servants who made a good and profitable use of their talents, and were consequently invited to " enter into the joys of their Lord." (*Mt. xxv. 14 to 30.*)

Time, which is so precious a gift, remains not long in our possession ; for it is exceedingly rapid in its flight : and this is another consideration, which should make us diligent in our endeavors to employ it well.

Its course is more irresistible than that of the raging torrent ; its flight more rapid than the lightning's flash. As soon as we have well begun to tread the path of life, our career is run ; and we are hurried into eternity. Our hours pass away, one after another, in rapid succession ; and are swallowed up in the boundless ocean of eternity ; and as many of these hours, as we suffer to pass unemployed, or misemployed, are so many irrecoverably lost. Let this consideration make us more wary and diligent in the good management of our time.

As a more powerful inducement to do this, let us cast our eyes towards heaven, where the Saints, who have gone before us, are now enjoying the rewards of their good use of time. Oh ! with what joy and satisfaction do they now look back on the time which they spent in the service of their Creator, in singing the praises of the Almighty, in preparing for the Sacraments, and in adoring their Saviour, during the celebration of the sacred Mysteries ! They now experience, with David, how " one day spent in the courts of the Lord, is to be esteemed above thousands passed in the tents of sinners." (*Ps. lxxxiii. 11.*)

Let us regulate our ideas of time according to what theirs now are ; and let us employ it henceforth in such a manner, as that we may render ourselves worthy to receive that reward for our good use of time, which they are now enjoying.

But this cannot be effected without labor and perseverance. For the distance between us, and the mountain of perfection which we have to ascend, is very great ; and the time, which we have for ascending thither is very short. We must not, therefore,

loiter ; nor squander away our time in such things as are nothing to the purpose. For the day of our life will soon be passed ; and that night, wherein no man can work, will come quickly upon us, and prevent us from pursuing our journey. Whilst others, then, sacrifice their time to pleasures, to amusements, to "treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath" (*Rom. ii. 5*), let us manage ours with diligence, and the strictest economy.

For, in due time, God will examine our works, and require a strict account of our time ; and what shall we be able to say then, if we now squander it away in idle amusements ; or if we perform our actions through mere habit, necessity, or inclination, rather than in obedience to the will of God ; or if the faculties of our mind, and the powers of our body, are wasted solely on affairs of the present life, rather than employed in loving and serving our Creator, and saving our immortal soul ?

If we now look back upon the past year, can we say that we have employed our time well—that we have discharged the duties of our state of life faithfully—that we have given due time to prayer, meditation, preparing for the Sacraments, and our other spiritual duties,—in fine, that we have given to God all that was due to Him ? If not, let us resolve to do so now at least ; let us endeavor to redeem the time we have already lost, by being more watchful and diligent in future, by giving ourselves up to the performance of good works,—and by discharging faithfully all our religious duties ;—in a word, by making all the time we have remaining conducive to our eternal welfare, performing our actions with the pure intention of pleasing God. And then, when the angel of death shall proclaim, that time for us shall be no more, we shall be prepared to receive the summons with joy ; because our days will then be full days ; and we shall be perfected in virtue, and in every good work.

We may then say with St. Paul : " I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give me in that day ; and not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing."

SECOND LESSON.

Epiphany: Or the Vocation of the Gentiles in the Person of the Magi.

“ They offered him gifts : gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”—ST. MATT. ii. 11.

Among the prophecies concerning the birth of our Lord, there was one which predicted that his coming on earth would be announced to the people of the East by a miraculous star. And so it came to pass, that shortly after the birth of Jesus Christ, rich and powerful princes of that part of the world, who were well acquainted with the science of the stars, and known by the name of Magi, saw in the skies, the light of a star shining out still more brightly than the others, and as yet utterly unknown to them. Remembering then the words of the prophets, and reckoning that it was just the time appointed for the coming of the Son of God, they started on their journey, in the direction of Judæa, and came to Jerusalem. On arriving at this town, their first question was : “ Where is he that is born King of the Jews ? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to adore him.” This news spread rapidly over Jerusalem, and came to the knowledge of King Herod. It troubled him much ; for he imagined that the Son of God could not be other than a rich and powerful prince, who would strive to wrest his crown from him. Under the impulse of this feeling he called together the learned men of Jerusalem and asked them where it was that the Christ was to be born. Wicked Herod put this question to them, with the full intention to kill the infant king. The learned men answered that the prophecies declared the Christ was to be born at Bethlehem, a small town in Judæa. Then Herod called the wise men, and said to them : “ Go, and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may go and adore him.” The wise men continued their journey towards Bethlehem, only they were not sure where to find the infant Jesus ; and, behold, just as they left Jerusalem,

suddenly the brilliant star shone out once more before their astonished eyes. It seemed to go before them, till at last it stopped over the stable where the child was. On entering in, the wise men saw the beautiful infant Jesus with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves before him in adoration, and offered him rich presents of gold and perfumes. Then they went back on their way home, very glad to have seen the Saviour; and just as they were returning to Herod, to give him an account of their journey, God, in a dream, told them to return to their country by another road. It is in commemoration of this event that the Church celebrates the feast of the Epiphany.

Of what use will this feast be to you, my children? It will remind you, that you also have a guide on the journey you are taking while travelling on earth. A star does not, it is true, shine on you from on high, but a light illumines you soul and guides it. Conscience awakens in you a love of virtue, wisdom, and points out all your duties, and this is the road, my children, the only sure one that brings us to Jesus Christ. Follow them as faithfully as the kings of whom the Gospel speaks to-day, the road which is marked out to you, go and offer the homage of your youthful hearts, to the new-born Saviour. This homage will be still more agreeable to him than the presents of the wise men: and if this morning you meet a little child, bestow your alms on him, in remembrance of the poor child of Bethlehem.

THIRD LESSON.

On Duty Towards God.

“Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and thou shalt serve him only.”
—DEUT. vi. 13.

Faith, Hope, Charity, Adoration—in these few words, my children, we may sum up the whole of our duty towards God. By Faith we believe in him, by Hope we hope in him, by Charity we love him with our whole hearts, by Adoration we give

him that worship which is due to him, and we serve him as he desires to be served.

FAITH.

To believe in God is to believe that God exists. Well, who can doubt it, my children, when contemplating the beautiful spectacle of the universe, all the marvels contained in the world? Who could suppose that earth and heaven were made by themselves and by chance?

To believe in God is also to place your confidence in him, that is to say, to look up to him as your sovereign good, that infinite good which is to fill our hearts in this world and in the next.

Faith consists also in believing God's word, as written in the holy Scripture, and all the truths taught us by the church. These truths are called articles of faith. In the number there are many you cannot understand, that you will even never understand, because they are above the powers of the human mind : those are **mysteries**. We are, nevertheless, commanded to believe in them as firmly as if we understood them ; for God, who teaches us these truths, never deceives us ; nor can he either ever possibly make a mistake. If it seems to you difficult to believe in what you have not seen, what you cannot understand, I shall make you remark, my children, that you do not doubt the facts reported in history, nevertheless they did not take place under your eyes. You also believe in the changes of the seasons, in the flowers which blossom on the trees, in the fruit which comes after the flowers, in the ear of corn shooting up out of a small seed sown in the earth : you see all that, it is true, but do you understand it? Certainly not. These things are to you as so many mysteries ; why then would you hesitate to believe in the mysteries of religion? This doubt, my children, would be a want of faith. You also sin against faith on neglecting to be instructed upon religion, the study of which is necessary to teach us all we ought to believe.

HOPE.

To hope in God is to expect that in his infinite goodness he will grant us after death eternal happiness in heaven, and until

then his divine grace, by the help of which alone we can obtain it. Our hope is founded, my children, on God's mercy for mankind, on the merits of Jesus Christ, who made himself our Saviour and our intercessor, standing between us and his Father's wrath, and finally on the promise made by God himself, never to refuse us his help. Here is another proof of the great goodness of God ; he orders us to consider hope as a duty, and even without his command it would seem impossible not to entertain so sweet, so consoling, and so natural a feeling. Nevertheless, my dear children, without being aware of it, you have already sinned against this duty. When you say that you cannot get the better of such and such a defect, that you will never be able to control your temper, this disheartening feeling is a want of faith and of hope in the God of the weak and of children. The poor and the afflicted who yield to despair, sin also against the hope they ought to have in Providence, in the God who consoles.

You rightly understand, no doubt, my children, that neither our confidence in God, nor the hope of his divine help, in assisting us to effect our salvation, should prevent us from working at it ourselves with the greatest ardor. Zeal and good will are requisite to obtain God's grace, and if he condescends to assist us, it is on condition that we shall begin by helping ourselves.

ON CHARITY.

Charity consists in loving God with all our hearts and above all things. Faith and Hope, my children, are the foundations of Charity. How can we refrain from loving that God whom faith shows to us as so powerful and so good, that God from whom we hope such an abundance of grace? Has he not also been the first to show us his love? And you above all, my children, you, still so young, are you not already loaded with his benefits? Are you not brought up in the true religion, in the bosom of the true Church, surrounded by such care and such love! In fact, to know how good is the Lord, it would be sufficient to relate the history of your existence, so easy and so happy. Love God then from the depths of your souls, love him above all things, love him more than those who are dearest to

you, for it is he who gave them to you, he who made them kind and affectionate towards you. I know you cannot always feel for God, in your heart, a sensible love like that you feel for a father; but in thinking often of God, in remembering his divine benefits, gratitude will make you grow more truly attached to him. Besides, my children, he has told us himself that to love him is especially to keep his word, and to do his will.

ON ADORATION.

To adore God is to give him that worship we owe him, as our creator and our master. To God alone adoration is due. Homage is offered to the blessed Virgin and to Saints, you may pray to them, as powerful protectors, intercessors before God; but you do not adore them.

The worship we owe God is inward and outward. It should be inward, that is to say, it should come from the soul. While saying your prayers, it would be vain to kneel with clasped hands, for even then, if you think not of God, but of something else, you do not adore him. In this case, my dear children, you deserve the reproof our Lord addressed once to the Jews: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

The outward worship, also ordained by God, consists in the prayer and ceremonies made use of by the Church. Prayer is the expression of our feelings towards God. The ceremonies are intended to direct our minds to pious thoughts. In all these exercises of devotion, my dear children, our demeanor ought to be humble, respectful, and devotional; for everything in us, the body as well as the soul, must adore God and worship him.

We are obliged to adore God. "Thou shalt adore the Lord thy God, and Him alone shalt thou serve." Being our Creator, He is entitled to receive from us all praise, homage, and adoration. We should adore Him with our whole being. As we are composed of a body and soul, it is our duty to give God homage for both one and the other. Besides, external actions have a great effect upon the soul, and make us love and serve God more fervently.

FOURTH LESSON.

On Prayer, its Necessity and Efficacy.

“Be instant in prayer ; watching in it in thanksgiving.”—St. Paul, Col. iv. 2.

To pray, my dear children, is to converse with God, speaking to him with your hearts, and not with your lips only. To pray to God, is to forget your own doings, your studies, your games, your amusements, so as to think only of God, who is in heaven, and at the same time near us on earth ; and when we are truly convinced that God is there present, that he listens to us, then we tell him our thoughts ; we ask him for what we are most in need of, we admire his all-powerfulness, we feel we love him for his great goodness : such is prayer.

Prayer is one of our most important duties ; God ordains it us in several places of his Gospel, and our Lord, who surely did not need prayer, nevertheless prayed unceasingly to set us the example of this holy exercise. It would then, first of all, be disobeying God to neglect prayer ; and besides it would make us become our own enemies, and you will easily understand why. We are, my children, in continual want of God's help and of his gifts. He alone can preserve the life he gave us, and we should lose it as soon as he would cease to watch over us. He it is who gives growth unto all the fruits of the earth, which become our food. He fills the fountains with water to quench our thirst, and gives the lambs their wool with which warm garments are made for us ; every day he removes from our path numberless dangers ; and when we are ill, it is he who blesses the care of those who love us. Who gives the wild flowers power to cure us ? It is God himself and he alone.

Thus, as you see, our bodily wants oblige us to have frequent recourse to prayer, and, on the other hand, the requirements of our souls are none the less numerous, and these latter, my children, are of still greater importance. The soul is of much higher value than the body, for it was created according to God's image, and is immortal. We must then pray above all for our

souls. The health and beauty of the soul is in its innocence and righteousness, sin disfigures it in the eyes of God, who detests evil, and nothing but what is pure, saith our Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven. How can man resist his evil propensities which draw him on, he, who is inclined to sin from the very day of his birth. And you, my dear children, young as you are, do you not feel already this sad inclination towards evil, and does it not often happen to you to say : that duty is irksome, obedience very difficult, that you cannot correct yourselves, or alter your temper? Alas! grown people cannot do more than you if left to themselves; but everything is possible by the help of God. This help is called grace, and this grace God never fails to grant to our fervent prayers: "Ask, and thou shalt receive," saith our Lord, and his words are truth itself.

When ought we to pray? Jesus Christ teaches us, my children, to pray incessantly, and I have just shown you how necessary it is for us to do so. Do not be content then, by merely saying punctually your morning and evening prayers, but accustom yourselves to pray now and then in the day-time. You can do it without kneeling down, and without even addressing many words to God. A good thought is a prayer: a good action, well performed duty, temptation withstood, are as so many prayers whose language God understands. And then in the course of a day, how many opportunities there are of uplifting the heart towards God! Now, to thank him for the pleasures he gives us: "O Lord, how good thou art to me!" can you say to him for that. Then it is to beg him to help you when you are tempted to do wrong: "My God," may you then say, "I feel inclined to yield to my vanity, to my laziness, but I still wish only the more fervently to be good; help me!"

Thus it is, my children, that prayer will become familiar and dear to you, and that it will bring down on us those blessings which the Lord is always ready to grant.

When we render this homage to God, the heart must be in accordance with our words, because vocal prayer is the outward expression of the inward feelings of the heart. And we should occasionally during the day pour forth our hearts to God.

FIFTH LESSON.

What may be considered as Good Prayers.

“ I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the understanding.”—ST. PAUL, 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

My dear children, we must, first of all, pray to God with great awe ; for we are but poor, weak, and often very guilty creatures, and when praying, we speak to the all-powerful Master of the universe, to that God who is holiness itself.

You must also pray attentively. Think of what you are saying, and not turn your head on one side and on another, to see what goes on around you ; neither must you say your prayers in haste, so that you may have finished quickly, or pray only by habit, and as it were without thinking of what you are doing ; but every time you pray, you should be as if absorbed in meditation, so as to give your whole attention to the words your lips pronounce. Is it not the least we can do, to seem to wish for the grace we ask of God ? How can we expect him to hear us, says a saint, if we do not listen ourselves to what we say ? It is really difficult my children, and particularly at your age, to think for some time together, for some few moments only, of the same thing. God knows it, and his indulgent goodness will forgive your being inattentive during your prayers, if this inattention is involuntary, and if you try to drive it away from your mind.

We must also pray with confidence and in the name of Jesus Christ ; for he said : “ Everything you will ask my Father in my name, he will give it to you.” O my children, what an encouraging promise for us, who have so much to ask for ! Invoke then with confidence the sacred name of Jesus Christ ; it is through him you will obtain every grace.

And lastly, we must pray with perseverance and without ever tiring, even should we not promptly obtain what we have asked God for. Fear not, my children, to fatigue him with your prayers ; he is much more patient than men are ; and then, does he not cherish children of your age, and when on earth, was he

not pleased to be surrounded by them? When you address him, remember that the only prayers agreeable to him are those which come from the heart. Think of God, love him truly; therein lies the secret of good prayers as of every virtue.

What are you going to ask of God, my dear children? First of all, ask him for the knowledge and love of what is right: first and greatest of all blessings, this knowledge will stand in stead of all other. You can then ask for yourself and for those you love, for health, and the full enjoyment of that happiness which purity of life ensures. God will no doubt grant these favors, but in asking him for them, you must be quite resigned not to obtain them, if such be his will, for he knows better than we do ourselves what is good for us.

SIXTH LESSON.

The Lord's Prayer Explained.

"Thus therefore shall ye pray."—ST. MATT. vi. 9.

Our Lord, being one day surrounded by a great number of people, who followed him attracted by the report of his miracles, ascended a hill, from the top of which he spoke to this multitude, eager to listen to his holy words. The Gospel gives us the whole of the admirable sermon Jesus Christ then preached. This sermon is the abridgment of the divine law he came on earth to impart. The sacred duty of prayer could not be forgotten by our Lord, so he wished to teach us how to perform it properly, and at the same time to destroy a then general error, that the longest prayer is also the best. "When you pray," said Jesus Christ, "do not make long speeches: your Father knows what you need before you ask him for it. Thus therefore shall ye pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us to-day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."

This prayer, called the *Lord's prayer*, is the best we can say, as it was dictated to us by Jesus Christ himself. That is why the Church repeats it so often during the offices, why parents teach it to their little children, as soon as they begin to speak, and every day we repeat it in our morning and evening prayers. Try, my dear children, not to say it merely by habit. I am going to explain to you each one of its words, which include thoughts that you can understand, and with the meaning of which it is right you should be fully acquainted while offering up to God this admirable prayer.

We begin by saying: *Our Father*—and are we not God's children? Has he not created us by his power, adopted us by his mercy, and made us brethren of his Son Jesus Christ? Is it not he also who watches over and preserves us, who gives us all we possess, and first of all those kind parents who take care of our childhood? He is thus indeed our Father, he is also the best of fathers. My God, am I really the affectionate and dutiful child I should be to thee? We call God our Father, because he is the father of all men, and that we ought always to pray for one another.

Who art in heaven.—God is present everywhere; but it is in heaven that he dwells in all his glory, and it is there that the Saints and Angels sing to him eternal praise and adoration. Heaven is the home of our Father, where each one of us has his allotted place. O my children, let us be good here below, and thus deserve one day to join *Our Father who is in heaven*.

Hallowed be thy name.—God's name is the most holy of all names; it cannot become more so by our prayers, but what we ask is that this divine name may be known and adored all over the earth; that it may cease to be impiously blasphemed, and that we, at least, may never pronounce it otherwise than with respect and love.

Thy kingdom come.—God is the King of kings, the master of all things; but he desires and we wish to see his reign established in every heart. Do not refuse him yours, my dear children; he only asks them of you to make you happy.

Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.—There is

but one will in heaven : the will of God, to which the Angels and Saints submit with joy. Here below it is quite the reverse : every one desires to act according to his own fancy ; we generally follow our tastes and our caprices in preference to the law of God. We rebel very often against those who have the power of commanding us, and it often happens that we murmur at the events of life he allows or ordains. It would be in vain, my children, for us to ask God by prayer, that his will may be accomplished, if we stubbornly refuse to do it : so we must first of all begin by submitting to it with all our heart, so as to be able afterwards to say most sincerely : My God, I have no other will but thine ; I want to obey thee on earth as the angels obey thee in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.—By these words, my children, we pray to God to grant us what is necessary for the body and for the soul. The poor, who have no other means of subsistence, excepting those which Providence sends them, verily rely upon divine Providence for their bit of daily food. The rich, who can buy their food, ask God for it all the same, thus showing it is from him they derive their wealth ; and we all ask for bread only, to teach us that we must live simply and be content with little. If, in thy goodness, O my God, thou givest us more than what is absolutely necessary, we promise thee to share it with the poor.

The bread which constitutes the food of the soul is God's grace, his divine word, and particularly the holy Eucharist, which you will have the happiness to receive one day.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us.—The forgiveness granted to those of our brethren who have wronged or grieved us, is the condition of the forgiveness God grants us when we have offended him. God will show no mercy to those who have shown no pity to others. And what a misfortune would it not be, my children, not to be able to rely upon that mercy for which we stand in such great need ? Let us then never feel spiteful or entertain malice against any one ; let us forget the evil done to us, and let us forgive it with all our heart, so that the Lord may also forget all our faults and forgive them in his turn.

And lead us not into temptation.—God never tempts any one, my children ; only he allows us to be tempted by the evil spirit. That is why we ask God every day to avert from us, if possible, the opportunities which may expose us to the misfortune of offending him, why we pray him not to allow us ever to be tempted beyond our strength.

But deliver us from evil.—By this last request, my children, we pray God to preserve us from all evil, from the sufferings of the body, as well as from the sorrows of the heart, and particularly from the only real evil, that evil which is most to be feared, sin, which would make us God's enemies.

SEVENTH LESSON.

Sunday: The Obligation of Rest, and of Divine Worship.

“Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.”—Exod. xx. 8.

If there be one day in the week particularly consecrated to the Lord, it is not, my dear children, that every day of our existence does not belong to God, and ought not to be employed in his service. But this God of goodness, who might demand for himself alone every moment of the life he gives us, allows us to employ six days out of seven at our studies, our business, and provided we never go against God's will, that every one of our actions be done with the view of pleasing him, our days may be sanctified, and our life become truly Christian, without our being forced to remain long hours in church, to go through numerous devotional exercises. The fulfilment of the most ordinary duty, if offered to God piously, is another way of serving him, and as it was truly said by one of the Fathers of the Church, a well-known Saint : Work is prayer.

But there is a day God has kept for himself entirely. This day is his : it is called by his name ; it is Sunday, the Lord's day. It is well to remark, my children, that God ordered us to rest on the seventh day, not only for the sake of his glory, but

also with fatherly foresight. Men were created by him ; he knows that their strength exhausts itself, that to work assiduously too long at a time would do them harm, and that it is good now and then to have a day's rest, which, in doing away with the fatigue of the preceding days, will give fresh strength to undertake the work of the morrow.

With the Hebrews, the Lord's day was the last of the week ; it was called the *Sabbath*. God himself had ordained the choice of that day, in remembrance of that one on which he rested after having created the world. These are the Lord's own words to his chosen people : " Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day." Thou shalt work during six days ; but the seventh thou must do no work, for thy God rested on the seventh day, and that is why he blessed this day, and consecrated it to his service.

According to the ancient law, my children, the rest of the sabbath day was so strictly kept that you could not trespass against it in the slightest manner without being condemned to death. All kinds of work were so strictly forbidden, that even food was prepared the day before. The manna of the desert, which fell on earth every morning for the Israelites, did not fall on the sabbath day. The people gathered a double quantity on the preceding day, and God caused it to keep quite fresh during two days.

According to our religion the day of rest is on Sunday, because this day, the first of the week, was the day of our Lord's resurrection. The holy Church, less severe than the law of Moses, as concerns the sanctification of the Sunday, nevertheless orders the people to hear Mass, and to abstain from all servile work, that is to say, from all heavy labour done by hand.

The Church also wishes the people to spend the greater part of their time in good works, to attend the evening service, to go to hear God's word, to read some religious book, to give alms to the poor, and in a word, *to keep the Sunday with devotion by serving God in the same manner.*

But it may happen, my dear children, that you pass the greater part of Sunday in Church, without having really sanctified the Lord's day. It is by the pious bent of the soul, and by abstain-

ing from sin that you really fulfil God's commandments. This is what you must remember.

It is right, my children, that Sunday should be to you, not only a day of rest, but also a day of recreation ; nevertheless a certain time should be set apart for useful occupations. Cast a look back on the events of the past week, make good resolutions for the coming week, put your books and things in order, cast up your little accounts : and thus you can very well employ your time on Sunday.

I should like you to associate some religious thought even with your amusements. This will never make them dull : it would only help to banish from your games those quarrels which so often occur, would make you more amiable towards your play-fellows, and more inclined to be kind to a younger brother or to a little sister.

Remember, my children, that everything in your behavior, must mark the difference between Sunday and the remainder of the week, and show that Sunday is a holy day, that it is the Lord's day.

EIGHTH LESSON.

On the Respectful Demeanor We Ought to Have in Church.

“ My house shall be called the house of prayer.”—ST. MATT. xxi. 13.

At that time, it was six days before his Passion, our Saviour entering God's temple, drove out of it all those who came there to buy and to sell, he overturned their tables and chairs, and said : “ My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.” We have much to learn from these few lines of the holy Gospel ! Let us meditate on them, my children : they will teach us to know the sentiments and feelings we ought to have in going to church.

Jesus Christ, speaking of the temple, said *my house*. It was,

in fact, in the temple of Jerusalem that the holy majesty of God had taken up his dwelling ; it was there that God had chosen his abode, there he was to be adored by his creatures, there they were told to hearken to his voice. A Catholic church, my children, can be still more rightly named the house of the Lord, for Jesus Christ resides there truly in the sacrament of Eucharist. Our eyes cannot see him, but faith tells us he is really present amidst us. O my God, if our hearts were more fully persuaded of thy august presence, then indeed thy house would be really the house of prayer, of that prayer which consists in glorifying thee, in blessing thee, in imploring thy help, in confiding to thee our misery ! Poor children, you who have such great need of God's blessing, and of his protection ! when you go to church, how can you so often forget that you are in the presence of *One* who can do all he wills, and who is ever ready to grant all that is humbly asked of him by prayer.

If our Lord appeared now all at once in the temple, certainly, he would not find sellers like those that he once drove away in such wrath ; but now, to how many Christians without fervor, to how many heedless children given up to all sorts of distractions, might not Jesus Christ still say in a tone of reproach : " My house is a *house of prayer* ! " To let your mind run on thoughts that have nothing to do with devotion ; to be occupied only in looking at the people who come into the church and those who go out of it ; to examine with curiosity the demeanor, perhaps even the dress of the persons who surround you, instead of looking into your own hearts to see what may be there displeasing to God, is not that, my children, being wanting in the respect due to the holy temple ? And this sin must be a very displeasing one in Jesus Christ's eyes, for it is the only one he punished with a severity not habitual to him, to him always so good, so full of indulgence and of gentleness. I know, my children, and God knows also, that at your tender age, the service must often seem long. It may also happen that sometimes the sermon is beyond your understanding. If, nevertheless, you lend it an attentive ear, you may now and then reap some simple advice, that God would make you understand quite well, in reward for

the respect you show his holy word. This respect would assuredly be more charitable, and at the same time more beneficial to you, than the malicious and frequently improper remarks that you allow yourselves to make on the preacher's voice and gestures.

When the service is very long, it is not required of you, my children, to keep up your attention until you feel fatigued. When you have prayed a long time, you may close your book for a few moments, but at least you must maintain the pious thoughtfulness of your soul, and you must remain respectfully quiet so as to disturb no one around you. You may then examine the interior of the church, everything may be to you a source of useful reflections. Here first of all, at the entrance of the church, is the stone vessel which contains the holy water. This holy water used by the church in the greater part of her ceremonies, reminds us how necessary it is to be pure and without stain when about to appear before God: it contributes also to procure us that purity of heart which God requires of us, and that is why it takes a part in the principal religious ceremonies of our life. When we shall have left this world, Jesus Christ's ministers and our friends will come once more and sprinkle some on us.

At the further end of the sanctuary, my children, is placed the high altar: it is ornamented with wax candles and chandeliers, in the midst of which may be seen the cross, that precious sign of our salvation. A little lower down, guarded by cherubim with gilt wings, is the tabernacle, where Jesus Christ dwells in the sacrament of his love. The holy sacrifice of Mass is celebrated every day on the Altar; a stone railing closes the sanctuary, that is the holy table, where the people come to receive the blessed sacrament.

Do you see further on, that chapel which you cannot help remarking among and above all the others? It is the chapel of the Blessed Virgin; in which are placed the varied flowers of each season; you will always meet there young girls who pray to Mary as to their kind patron, mothers who come to implore Mary to protect the lives of their children.

Here is the pulpit of truth, from which the pastor explains the gospel to the people ; the confessional, from which you come forth with a contented heart, after having obtained the forgiveness of your sins ; further on, the altar for the dead, with its black curtains, its emblems of sorrow, its funeral ornaments ; in front, the baptismal font, where little children become little angels. Above, near the arched roof, you may perceive the organ with its grave and religious sounds. And at last, under this arch begins the long winding staircase which leads to the elevated turrets of the church. There hang the bells which sound the call to prayer, and give pious thoughts to those Christians whom duty or illness keep away from the house of God.

May these reflections, my children, recur to your mind when you go to church ; may you never, when there, experience a feeling of fatigue or weariness ! Rather may you exclaim, like David : “ I rejoiced when these words were said to me : we are going to the house of the Lord. A single day passed in your temple, O my God, is worth more than a thousand other days ! ”



NINTH LESSON.

Of Love to our Brethren.

“ And the second commandment is like to this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* ”—St. Matt. xxii. 39.

What then is this most important commandment, this commandment which obliges us as fully as the one by which God orders us to love and serve him ? It is the love we owe our neighbors.

By creating men to live together, my children, God imposed on them the fulfillment of certain duties towards one another, duties of benevolence and mutual affection, which contribute to

the happiness of each one. These duties towards our neighbor are of different kinds: each and all are, however, expressedly contained in the Lord's commandment: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" This precept, in fact, contains all the others, for it is easy to fulfil them all when you faithfully observe this one. Is it not natural, my friends, to try to avoid giving the slightest cause of grief to those you love, and even when you can, to do them a kindness, to pity them under misfortune, and console them in their troubles? Yes, no doubt. All these good feelings are also to be met within our intercourse with our neighbor if, according to God's precept, our heart is full of sincere charity towards him.

But who is this neighbor we are to love? You think perhaps it is only the persons you know and who are your countrymen? No, my children, your neighbor is every man, without a single exception, not even the wicked, not even our enemies, if we are unfortunate enough to have any. And why did God command us thus to love each other? Because we are all members of the same family, all children of God, sons of Adam, our first father. That is why for a Christian there should be no strangers, and why in each one of his fellowmen he sees a brother.

A universal charity to your neighbor, a charity which regards at the same time the wicked, our enemies, the unknown, is not as difficult to put in practice, as you might suppose, my children, Otherwise God would not have made a duty of this virtue; he orders nothing but what we can do, nothing of which he has not himself given us the first example. God takes care of all his creatures with the same tender forethought, and as he says himself, he makes his sun to shine on the good and on the wicked. Jesus Christ did still more than sacrifice himself for the salvation of mankind: he sought for sinners, in preference to the righteous, to lavish upon them his mercies; and it is for the former, more than for the latter, that he came on earth. During his stay here below, our Lord always returned kindness for injustice, good for evil. His most cruel enemies were never able to exhaust his charity, and he died on the cross, praying for his persecutors.

Here is your model, my children. Tell me now if, after such an example, you could still give way to that egotistical feeling which leads to the love of self only, and to the utter forgetfulness of what is due to others; that feeling of ill-will which prevents the pardon of slight offences, of little grievances committed, perhaps quite unintentionally, and which, even for that reason, ought to be easily forgotten. And you, particularly happy children, who see around you nothing but indulgence and goodness, how could you not show the same feelings to your neighbor? At your age, it is true, you are more in need of others than they of you; nevertheless a young child has often many opportunities of making himself useful, of showing himself attentive, obliging, ready to do any little kindness—above all, he can try never to be troublesome. And if while doing, out of love for his neighbor, the little that depends upon him, he promises to do in future what is impossible to him at present, he fulfills his duty towards his brother. So to act is to obey God's precept.

My children, you must not conclude, that by this precept God obliges us to love every one alike, and one as much as another. It is natural to prefer your parents to your friends, your friends to mere acquaintances, your countrymen to foreigners. Those whom we love from the depths of our hearts, with a particular tenderness, do we not love them much more than ourselves? and it is only as we love ourselves that God orders us to love our neighbors.

Not to do to others what you would not have done to yourself. To do to others what you would wish them to do to you. Such is the rule which must direct us in our feelings and in our actions towards others. Ah, if this law of charity were better observed, what peace in the world! what union in families! how much better should we be! and at the same time, my friends, how much happier!

Therefore, my children, let sincere fraternal charity be our universal practice—let us show ourselves to be true disciples of our divine Master, by loving our neighbor, as we love ourselves, and as Christ has loved us. For "this Commandment we have from God," that he who loveth God, love also his brother."

TENTH LESSON.

Ash Wednesday : the Necessity and Salutary Effects of Penance.

“For what is your life ? It is a vapor which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away.”—ST. JAMES, iv. 10.

In the first centuries of Christianity, my dear children, great sinners, at least those whose sins, having been committed publicly, had given bad example, were condemned by the Church to perform a public penance more or less long and severe, according to the importance of their sins. At the beginning of Lent, penitents went barefoot to the cathedral; there the Bishop exhorted them to repent, after which, taking some dust and marking them on the forehead, he said at the same time these words: “Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return.” Then the Bishop turned the penitents out of church, and they were not allowed to return thither until the time of their penance was ended.

My children, if we are now treated less severely, you must not conclude that our sins have become more excusable, or that we are less obliged to atone for them; though the Church now spares us the shame of public penance, we are none the less obliged to do sincere and real penance in the depths of our hearts, and we shall not cease to hear the necessity of penance preached during this holy time. In remembrance of this ancient custom, the Church, considering that all her children are sinners as of old, has adopted this ceremony of the giving of ashes on the first day of Lent, named accordingly Ash-Wednesday. The words uttered by the Priest whilst he marks our foreheads with the ashes, remind us that we must die some day, that it is good for us to think of our latter end, so as to atone for the sins already committed and to avoid committing others.

These serious thoughts can be of all the greater use to us at a time of the year, which gives to many the opportunity of acting foolishly and of grievously offending God in his goodness. As for you, my dear children, during these days of folly, I know

that you amuse yourselves under your parent's guidance and by their leave; however, it may be needful to remind some of you, who too deeply lament over the shortness of these days of pleasure, as, for instance little girls, who perhaps at a party, have been rather vain of their beauty or of their dress; I say that it is needful to remind them, that we are not in this world merely to amuse ourselves, and that our poor bodies, being made of dust and destined to fall once more into dust, it is folly to be so very proud of them. On Ash-Wednesday, let us then ask God, my children, to cure us of our vanity.

ELEVENTH LESSON.

Lent; the Necessity and the Benefits of Fasting and Abstinence.

“Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.”—ST. LUKE xiii. 5.

Lent is a time of penance and prayer, established by the Church as a preparation for the feast of Easter. Lent lasts forty days; and is on that account called also the holy quadregesima. During this time the Church obliges us to observe abstinence and fasting, so as to honor and imitate the fasting of our Lord, who passed forty days and forty nights in the desert, without tasting food, beginning thus the painful penance he came to perform on earth, for the redemption of our sins. My children, by fasting we deprive ourselves of part of our food, by abstinence we refrain from partaking of anything in the shape of flesh-meat. These practices have been for centuries considered as most approaching the spirit of penance; and you no doubt remember that in olden times the Ninevites tried, by ordering a public fast, to avert the wrath of God from their city.

During the early ages of the Church, Christians used frequently to fast; some did so all the year round; and now there still exist holy monks who practise fasting and abstinence with the same severity

In our days, on the contrary, my children, generally speaking, these rules of the Church are not strictly observed; though we are all still in the same great need of penance, and the Church, in its indulgence, has made the accomplishment of this duty much less difficult than it formerly was. Then, only one single meal was taken during the twenty-four hours; now it is allowed to add what is called the *collation*, which is a second meal, but a very light one.

Abstinence binds children above seven years of age; but the law of fasting is not imposed on children who are in need of very substantial food. But at the age of twenty-one, you will be subjected to it, and even then, if your health be delicate, you can obtain a dispensation from your confessor or the Priest of your parish. And on this point, let me tell you, my children, that you have no right to judge the motives which may lead your parents and persons who surround you to fall short in the fulfillment of these duties of fasting and abstinence. On this, you must make no reflections; you must merely make up your minds that when you are older, you will obey, to the utmost of your power, every commandment of the Church.

For the present, young as you are, it is already your duty, to do penance of some kind, during Lent, for your sins; God frees no one from this obligation, not even children of your age. Do not let this thought alarm you: God does not ask you to do anything very difficult, and to you penance will not be very trying. When you have offended your mother, you have no great difficulty, I suppose, in showing her your sorrow and in trying to atone for your ill-behavior. Well, during this holy time, you must act in the same way towards our Lord. Be more attentive while saying your prayers, more fervent during holy mass, more obedient at home. The poor ought to have a larger share of your little savings, and you must say to God: "O Lord, vouchsafe to accept these efforts and slight sacrifices till I am able to keep thy other commandments." This, my children, should be your penance during Lent.

TWELFTH LESSON.

On Duty towards our Parents.

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land."—EXOD. XX. 12.

My dear children, I have to speak to you to-day on your dearest duty, on the one which you fulfill with such happiness. To honor your parents, to reverence them, to show respect mingled with love and gratitude—can there be a feeling more natural than this, and is not this sacred obligation most deeply impressed in your hearts? Assuredly it might seem quite unnecessary to create such an obligation, to impose it on us as a duty; but God wishes to show us how important it is for us to fulfill this obligation; he wishes at the same time to make us understand that to fail in keeping it is an act of disobedience towards himself. If you understand well, my children, your duty towards your parents, and the motives on which this duty is founded, you will like to have it explained: if you have forgotten part of your duty, this conversation will, I hope, be of use to remind you of it.

The honor due to your father and mother comprises several equally important and sacred obligations; respect, love, obedience, gratitude, and care.

You owe respect to your parents, because they hold towards you the place of God himself; because it is he who gives them their authority over you, and that you depend entirely on them. You owe them respect also, on account of their virtues and their age, and last of all because next to God they are your highest superiors. The tenderness your parents show to you, their sometimes too great indulgence, your intimate and daily intercourse with them, must never cause you to forget the respect due to them; this respect should be as evident in your actions as in your language. Many words and manners, that might be allowed among equals, would be improper with superiors, and quite reprehensible towards a father.

What must then be thought of a child who considers himself

at liberty to argue with his parents, to uphold opinions that are quite the reverse of theirs, and answer rudely to their remonstrances? What must then be thought of a child who not only blames his father or mother in his own mind, but who does still worse and complains of them to strangers, or to play-fellows? I will not say that this child does not love his parents, but assuredly I feel inclined to believe that he respects them very little.

I should look upon it as almost an insult to you, to insist on the love you owe your parents; but let us pause for a moment and take note together of this remark: it will be well not to forget. Sincere affection, real tenderness, should not be kept hidden in the depths of our hearts or should not show itself merely in words and caresses: when you love truly, you do more than say it, you try to prove it. Your parents, my children, surely repeat to you several times a day how dear you are to them, but at the same time they also give you proofs of their tenderness at every moment of their lives. Show them your love in the same way by your constant fear of incurring their displeasure, by your wish to content them, by your entire obedience to their commands.

At another time we intend to enter into full particulars concerning obedience; but you must understand from this very moment, my dear children, the necessity there is for you to be obedient. Your parents have the task of bringing you up, of teaching you to get the better of your bad habits, and accustom you to practice virtue: how can they succeed in this attempt if you resist them, if your will be not entirely under the control of theirs?

Remember, my dear children, that your duty towards those to whom you are indebted for life, obliges you to show them every attention and affectionate care, as also the deepest gratitude, and whatever may be the faithfulness with which you fulfill this duty, be fully persuaded that you will never be able to return your parents more than a very slight portion of what they have done for you. If you knew how much trouble and anxiety you have already cost your poor mother, how many nights she has

passed by the side of your cradle, how great has been her grief at your slightest sufferings! If you could have seen her tears, heard her prayers when you were really ill! You can assuredly say that you owe her several times your life; and besides, is she not the one of all others who knows best how to make life pleasant to you?

Your mother, my children, takes an active part in your education, so as to lessen the difficulties of study; she herself watches over your temper, for fear no one else might know as well as she how to be both gentle and firm. Whilst striving to make you good and talented, she does not forget your amusements for your joy is her happiness. Oh, in return, ought you not to be desirous to do something for so kind a mother! Why, then, for instance, when she is busy, uneasy, or poorly, is it so difficult to obtain from you, dear children, less noisy games, a little peace and quiet?

And as to your father, my children, if business prevents him being from as frequently with you, he nevertheless shares all the feelings of your mother towards you. It is often to the exertion of the father of the family, and to the business he undertakes, that are owing the means required to give his children a good education. It is on account of the esteem due to him, that at a later period his sons will meet with protection and kindness. Does not this deserve your most affectionate gratitude?

You must show this gratitude to your parents, my children, by always being respectful, attentive, kind and amiable in your behavior towards them. It is thus you will fall into the practice of filial piety, that virtue to which, even in this world, the Lord has promised unnumbered blessings.

THIRTEENTH LESSON.

On Duty towards Those in Authority.

"Obey your prelates, and be subject to them, for they watch as being to render an account of your souls."—ST. PAUL, Heb. xiii. 17.

Parents are the first in authority over a child, but they are not the only ones. There are others to whom the child is under

sacred obligations: these are his teachers, the priests and the aged.

Your teachers, my dear children, your tutor, or those in fact who take charge of your education, stand towards you in the place of your parents, just as your parents in the place of God. To your teachers has been intrusted the care of bringing you up, of lavishing on you that care your parents cannot always bestow on you themselves. Thus a child owes his teachers respect, on account of the authority they have a right to exercise over him, and of the confidence his parents have in them. I regret to say, my dear children, that there are not many amongst you who fulfill this important duty towards teachers. A child who respects his parents as he ought, will behave towards his teachers with haughtiness and contempt; his greatest pleasure to find fault with them, to laugh at their manners or dress. Schoolboys consider this a great amusement. Such behavior is very much to be blamed, and is certainly displeasing to God, who bids us to respect our superiors.

My dear children, be then full of deference towards those who instruct you; listen also to their lessons with docility. This duty is not less important than the first, and your faithfulness in fulfilling it will be an advantage to you, as well for your education as for your disposition. By not listening to the advice of your superiors you injure yourselves only, and not those who bring you up; because if they suffer from the indocility of the children they instruct, it is only because of the deep interest they take in the welfare of their pupils. You must therefore obey your teachers like your parents, and if you cannot love them as tenderly, be at least grateful for the care and zeal they have shown you. It would be a great want of feeling and of justice, to think you are not in the least indebted to your professors because they have been paid for their lessons; and good education is such a precious benefit, that money can never sufficiently repay it, and that in return it deserves a sincere attachment.

Priests and your confessor in particular, are your teachers, my children, in that most important of all knowledge, the knowledge

of religion, by which you learn to be virtuous. Priests are the Lord's ministers, the pastors of his Church ; they teach the people the word of truth ; every day they offer up for them to God the holy sacrifice of Mass : by their ministry we receive the sacraments at the different periods of our life ; from the moment of our birth, to the day of our death, the priest calls down upon us the choicest blessings of heaven. We have then, as you see, many motives for considering them as kind and useful friends.

The Priests, following the example of their divine Master, are, above all, the friends of childhood : childhood is the cherished portion of the flock God has confided to their care. Those of you, my young friends, who have begun to attend the religious instruction given by God's ministers, can truly say, that of all their teachers, none have showed them more tenderness and kindness.

FOURTEENTH LESSON.

Duties towards the Aged.

"Rise up before the hoary head, and honor the person of the aged man."—LEVIT. xix. 32.

If I have placed the aged amongst those whom you are to look upon as your superiors, it is, my children, because experience and wisdom, ordinary fruits of a long life, make them so to say our teachers, because age has a right to our respect, and deserves it for more than one reason.

Seldom does a human being reach old age, my children, without having passed through painful trials, without having suffered a great deal. The old have seen, one after another, all the friends of their childhood pass away ; often have they even lost the beings of their dearest affection, children who were destined to survive them. Their hair has grown grey, their body is bent, as much perhaps by misfortune as by years. All aged people

have been more or less unfortunate: and do we not owe respect to misfortune?

The respect shown to the aged is so natural a feeling, that you meet with it at all times and in all countries. At Sparta it was to a certain degree considered as a religion. In the early days of Rome to old age were shown higher honors than to rank and wealth: young men used to stand up when an aged man entered the Temple, the Senate, or other public assemblies, and the best and highest seat was set apart for him.

We are very far, alas! from imitating such examples, and on this head children have generally much to reproach themselves with; too often, they look upon aged persons as ridiculous, and are always ready to laugh at them: ignorant and unexperienced as children still are, they imagine they know more and better than those who, having lived longer, have necessarily, even on that account alone, learnt a great deal. I own, my children, that sometimes great age weakens our intellects and our minds, but do you know what is then said of those kind and simple good old people, who have no longer either memory or forethought, whom trifles amuse or grieve, who become entirely dependent on others for all the requirements of their daily life? We say that they are verging on second childhood, which means that, to a certain degree, they have become more like you. Dear children, these same old men, now so broken down, so weakened by age, were perhaps, in their younger days, most remarkably gifted both in mind and in body! Such as they now are, such will you become yourselves some day, if it please God to spare you to a good old age. You will do well to think of this now and then.

Honor the aged man as if he were thy father, such is the advice of Holy Scripture. This advice shows you your duty towards your grandfather, or grandmother, or any other aged member of your family whom God has allowed to live on beyond the usual number of years allotted to man. No doubt, my dear children, your hearts are full of love and affection towards them, but that is not sufficient. You must show them every attention and kind care in your power, and thus console their latter years.

Every time you meet an old man, even if he be an entire stranger to you, behave towards him with that respect he has a right to expect from your youth; you will never fail in this respect, if every aged person recalls to your memory, either a grandfather who died after giving his grandchildren his last blessing, or a kind grandmother, whose consolation and whose joy you still are.

FIFTEENTH LESSON.

Readings for Palm Sunday and Holy Week.

“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”—ST. JOHN, xiii. 13.

My dear children, some time before his Passion, our Lord, on his road to Jerusalem, stopped at the little village of Bethania, not very far from the town. In that village lived our Saviour's friends Martha and Mary, with their brother Lazarus, whom Jesus Christ had raised from the dead a little time before. The tomb and sepulchre of Lazarus are still seen at Bethania, and are often visited by travellers, who go to the Holy Land as pious pilgrims.

Our Lord arrived at Bethania on the Sabbath eve, passed there the whole of the holy day, and on the next, he set out once more on his journey, followed by his disciples, and when they were already at the foot of the Mount Olivet Jesus said to two of his followers: “Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them to me: and if any man shall say anything to you, say ye, that the Lord hath need of them: and forthwith he will let them go.” The disciples followed their Master's orders; brought the ass, and our Lord rode on it.

It was thus, my dear children, that Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem, acting thereby very differently from the princes of

the earth, who never go over their kingdom but in triumph or mounted on a splendid horse, whilst Jesus, the God of heaven and earth, preferred the lowly animal disdained by men. Many centuries before, Zacharias had prophesied that our Saviour would thus appear in all humility, and had used the following words: "Behold thy king comes lowly and riding on an ass." Notwithstanding this humble appearance, my children, our Lord was received by the inhabitants of Jerusalem with shouts of joy, that more than one sovereign might have envied. His disciples were numerous, those who had witnessed his miracles were still more numerous; his beneficence had won the hearts of all. A great crowd of people came to meet him; **some** took off their clothes to spread them under his feet, others cut branches of trees and strewed the road with them, all exclaimed with joy: "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna"—which means hail and glory—"to the son of David!" The Gospel also tells us that the children, so much beloved by Jesus Christ, made themselves conspicuous by their eagerness and joy.

Incredible as it may appear to us, it is none the less a well-known fact, that a few days had scarcely elapsed before these same people, who then hailed our Lord with such loud protestations of joy, will clamor as loudly for his death; those who have strewed the ground before him with their garments will be the first to assist in stripping him of his clothes. These Jews who to-day honor Jesus Christ's royalty by such deep homage, will soon wrathfully upbraid him, and adding mockery to insult, will thrust on the sacred head of our Saviour a crown of sharp-pointed thorns!

Oh! my Saviour, whose triumph we also adore to-day, grant that we may never imitate the inconstancy of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

In memory of Jesus Christ's solemn entry in the holy city, this feast is called Palm-Sunday.

The Priests follow the procession to-day with palms in their hands, and in the church small palms or branches of other plants are blessed and distributed to the faithful who come to attend divine service. It is a holy custom to bring home every year,

one of these blessed palms, and hang it near one's crucifix. No doubt, my dear children, your mother placed, with her own hands, one of these blessed palms over your cradle, above that white-curtained pillow near which she has spent many a watchful hour, and who knows but what this pious mother put it there, in the fervent hope that perhaps it would thus protect your early years, and obtain for you from God the blessing of calm and tranquil sleep? You are now old enough, my children, to feel good and holy thoughts spring up in your hearts; may the sight of this blessed palm, when you awake in the morning, remind you of that part of our Saviour's life it intended to recall, and thereby make your prayers all the more fervent and sincere.

On Palm-Sunday begins the last week of Lent, called Holy Week, or the Great Week, on account of the holy mysteries and sacred remembrances it recalls to us. During this week, the sole occupation of the Church is to bring before us the history of our Lord's passion, of his death, and of his burial; the Priests are clothed in vestments that denote sorrow; on Good Friday, these vestments are black; flowers are no more to be seen on the altars; mournful chants only are sung. Truly fervent Christians live secluded, wrapt up in prayer, in exercises of penance. They come daily to adore Jesus Christ on the cross. Children who are as yet too young to assist at every service of the holy week, must at least spend it with great piety, and show themselves during this time more attentive and more zealous in the fulfilment of their duties.

SIXTEENTH LESSON.

Wednesday of the Holy Week.

"The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes assembled together against the Lord, and against his Christ."—ACTS iv. 26.

On the Monday and Tuesday of the holy week, my children, nothing particular takes place in Church. On the Wednesday

begins the service of the *Tenebræ*, which is also celebrated on the two following days. This service is so called because it is sung in the evening; it is also called *Nocturn*, because formerly it began at midnight. The *Tenebræ* are composed of psalms, of passages taken from the writings of the holy Fathers, and from the Lamentations of Jeremiah. These lamentations are sorrowful chants, which were inspired to Jeremiah by the knowledge imparted him by God, of the impending ruin of Jerusalem. All the prayers of *Tenebræ* are sung in a slow and mournful tone. During this office it is customary to light a triangular candlestick composed of fifteen branches, in each of which is fixed a wax-taper; at the end of each psalm, one of these wax-tapers is extinguished. These wax-tapers represent the light of heavenly knowledge gradually diffused over the world by the succeeding prophets until the coming of the Son of God on earth. The last taper alone remains lit; and is emblematic of Jesus Christ, who is the true light of man during all eternity.

Our Lord, my children, had returned from Jerusalem to Bethania; where he lived in the house of Simon the leper. On the eve of the day on which he was for the last time to eat the Pasch with his disciples, our Lord foretold his approaching death. On that same day the chief priests and ancients of the people were gathered together in the house of Caiphas, the high priest; they all hated Jesus Christ, on account of the affection the people showed him, and also because the virtues preached by our Lord were the condemnation of their vices. They met together accordingly to deliberate on the means of putting Jesus to death, and they said: "Not on the festival day, lest perhaps there should be a tumult among the people." In the meantime Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve Apostles, inspired by the demon of covetousness, shamefully plotted to sell his divine Master. He went to the princes of the priests, and said to them: "What will you give me, and I will deliver him up to you?" They promised him thirty pieces of silver, and from thenceforth he sought for an opportunity to betray our Lord.

All the secrets of men's hearts are known to Jesus, who was

therefore fully aware of Judas's criminal design. We can all the more easily imagine how deeply the ingratitude of one he had so loved must have wounded the heart of our Saviour. He most assuredly felt then what David experienced when persecuted and betrayed by his son Absalom: "I am torn with anguish in the depths of my soul," said the holy king; "It is not my enemy who insults me: it is thou, my son, thou whom I loved, thou, a part of myself."

How effectually do these sorrowful words express the sadness thou must have felt, O my Saviour, at thy Apostle's treason! How can I explain the sentiments with which such odious conduct inspires me? I feel my heart swell with indignation. And yet, my God, when I prefer my pleasure to thy holy will, as I often have had the misfortune to do, when I disobey thy laws after promising thee to be faithful, do I not also betray thee? Do I not, to a certain degree, imitate the ingratitude of Judas?

SEVENTEENTH LESSON.

Ceremonies of Maundy Thursday.

"Jesus, knowing that his hour was come, that he should pass out of this world to his Father; having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end."—ST. JOHN xiii. 1.

My dear children, to-day the Church celebrates the anniversary of the institution of the sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, and, in remembrance of this most precious gift, which we owe to our Lord's bounteous love, the Church sets aside, at least for a short time, all the sad memories of the Passion.

The morning service begins by high Mass, which is sung with great pomp and solemnity in remembrance of the institution of divine Eucharist. The Priests quit their mourning vestments, and sing once more the joyful canticle *Gloria in excelsis*, which has not been sung since the beginning of Lent. Our Lord's

Passion cannot, however, be forgotten, and during Mass the prayers still recall his sufferings. At the Mass the Priest consecrates two hosts instead of one, because it is not the custom to say Mass on Good Friday; this second host, set aside for the communion of the morrow, is carried in solemn procession by the clergy to an altar prepared for its reception.

This altar, my children, is generally in a darkened chapel, at the end of which, surrounded by a great number of lights, is placed a tomb representing the holy sepulchre; there each of us will go, in the evening, to adore our divine Saviour, dead and buried.

On Maundy Thursday, after morning service, the tabernacles are to be seen wide open and empty; the altars, stripped of their usual ornaments, are then washed by a Priest. This last ceremony represents the deep humility of Jesus Christ, who before the last supper did not disdain to lower himself even to washing the feet of his Apostles, to show them and us how necessary it is to purify our hearts with great care, when we prepare for communion.

In most churches, and particularly in cathedrals, a custom prevails, which reminds us most touchingly of this ceremony of the washing of feet. The Bishop or Priest, following the example of our Lord, kneels down before a certain number of poor people and washes their feet; according to another old custom, which for a long time was prevalent in France, my children, the king, divesting himself of the pomp with which he is generally surrounded, condescended, on Maundy Thursday, to wash the feet of thirteen poor children, and to wait on them himself at table, during the meal his bounty had prepared for them.

But let us return to the affecting recital of the Passion. Our sole occupation during the whole of this sad week should be to read it, to meditate over it, to let it penetrate into our hearts, remembering above all that it is for love of us, and for the sake of our salvation that Jesus Christ condescended to bear such insults, and to endure such excruciating pain.

Judas had then resolved to betray his divine Master, and only waited for a favorable opportunity to deliver him up to his

enemies. It was now the day of the Azymes, and the disciples, following our Saviour's commands, prepared all that was necessary to celebrate the Pasch, and in the evening Jesus sat down to supper with his twelve Apostles: "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer" did he say unto them; then he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it them, saying: "*Take ye and eat: this is my body.*" Then taking the chalice he gave thanks: and gave it to them, saying: "Drink ye all of this. *For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins.*"

Thus was instituted the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, in which Jesus Christ, carried away by his love for men, goes to the extent of giving himself to them as food. On this day, my dear children, the Apostles received holy communion for the first time. Judas feared not to partake of it, though he had already made up his mind to betray Jesus Christ. This base profanation only hardened him the more in his crime, and you all know the dreadful end of that wretched man. Such an example, my children, ought to make us fear to draw near the holy table when we are not well prepared: there cannot be a greater crime, or a more dreadful misfortune, than that of a sacrilegious communion.

After the last supper, our Lord led his disciples to Mount Olivet. Then Jesus said to them: "You shall all be scandalised on my account this night, for it is written: I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Which means, that which is about to happen to me, will shake the faith you have in me, and you will forsake me cruelly. "Lord," answered Peter, "I am ready to follow thee unto prison, even unto death." But Jesus said to him: "Peter, I say to thee, that on this night, before the cock crow twice, thou wilt deny me thrice."—Alas, my children, this happened but too truly!

Jesus, coming with his Apostles to a country place called *Gethsemane*, at the foot of the mountain, said to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death. Sit you here till I go yonder and pray.—And going a little further he fell upon his face praying and saying: Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from

me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done :—And there appeared to him an Angel from heaven strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed the longer. And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground."

O my children, let us pause here awhile to contemplate this dreadful agony. Jesus Christ, whom in our afflictions we call upon to help us, suffers to-day himself more than we have ever suffered. He who consoles us in our sorrows, is himself in need of consolation. No doubt, the knowledge of the tortures awaiting him increases his cruel anguish ; but it is particularly caused by the thought of our sins, by that of our ungratefulness. He foresaw, my children, that to many of his creatures his death would be useless, and it was this that made him feel sad with the sadness of death. Alas ! let us also be sad ; let us weep over our sins ; let us mingle our tears with those of the divine Saviour. You will easily understand, my dear children, that Jesus Christ was tortured with this agony of his own free will, and because he consented to experience to the utmost the bitterest anguish our poor nature would bear. He did that in order that the remembrance of his sufferings might alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted, the remembrance of his resignation might put a stop to their murmurings ; and if he received consolations of an Angel, was it not to teach us that it is to Heaven alone we must look for consolation ?

Our Lord came back to his disciples and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And as Jesus Christ was seeking to encourage them, behold there came Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude armed with swords and clubs : and he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying : "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, hold him fast." And forthwith coming to Jesus he said : "Hail, Rabbi." And he kissed him. And Jesus said to him : "Friend, wherefore art thou come ?"—Must not Judas have had a heart harder than a stone not to have fallen down at his Master's feet on hearing this kind and loving word, *my friend !*

. . . Alas ! and you, dear children, when you are on the point of doing wrong, of yielding cowardly to temptation, of betraying

the fidelity you owe to God, do you not hear the voice of our Lord saying to you inwardly: "My friend! my child! what art thou going to do? Why art thou here?"

The soldiers, seizing hold of Jesus, led him to Caiphas the high priest, where the scribes and ancients were assembled. Then the disciples, leaving him, fled, Peter alone followed him from afar off, even to the court of the high priest, and going in, he sat with the servants, that he might see the end. And the chief priests and the whole council sought false witnesses against Jesus. But where could any be found? Our Lord had passed amongst them doing good; the little children, the aged, the sick, all had shared his bounties: all these could bless him; but to accuse him, none could be found, and they were obliged to call in false witnesses. Jesus did not condescend to say a word in his defence; only, when asked by the high priest if he were the Christ the Son of the living God he answered: "Thou sayest it." At these words, the priests exclaimed, "He has uttered blasphemy—what need of witnesses?" Then began for Jesus the numerous, cruel tortures of his Passion. They spat on his face, beat him mercilessly, loaded him with humiliations and insults.

Peter meanwhile remained outside, and a servant maid being there asked him if he were not a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth; and he denied it three times, just as Jesus had prophesied. At that moment the cock crew. Our Lord turning, looked at Peter, and this look of kindness, my children, made him remember the words of Christ. He wept bitterly over his sin: he not only wept over it, but resolved to make atonement for it, was forgiven, and became, as you all know, the head of Jesus Christ's church. Ah! may we also, when God reproaches us with our faults, either by timely warning, or by some good promptings of our heart, may we then, like Saint Peter, repent, weep, and become at last worthy of God's forgiveness and of his mercy!

Then, being enabled to avoid relapsing, we will enjoy the peace of a good conscience during life; we will have confidence and consolation on our deathbed; and we will receive, after death, the eternal rewards promised to true penitents.

EIGHTEENTH LESSON.

Good Friday.

"And Jesus crying with a loud voice said : Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."—ST. LUKE xxiii, 46.

Good Friday!—Ah! what a mournful day! . . . What painful remembrances it recalls to our minds! How grieved in heart do we not feel to-day, when we think of our blessed Saviour's death! And yet we must not forget, my children, that this day of mourning is at the same time a thrice-blessed day for us. Jesus Christ's sufferings grieve us, it is true; they make us shed tears, but nevertheless they redeem and save us. For thee, O Lord! the hour of sacrifice was awaited with joy, so great was thy desire to offer thy life for the salvation of men. Oh! while meditating on thy sufferings, let us try to penetrate the deep mystery of thy exceeding love, and to fill our hearts, O my God, with the deepest gratitude.

The night had been spent by our Lord, my children, in the midst of the most terrible outrages. At daybreak, the chief priests and ancients of the people held council against Jesus, that they might put him to death. And they brought him bound, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor. Then Judas, seeing that our Lord was condemned, repented of his crime, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and ancients saying: "I have sinned, betraying innocent blood." But they answered: "What is that to us? look thou to it." Casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, Judas then, not finding in his heart that confidence in God which alone can inspire true repentance, despaired and hanged himself.

My children, when Jesus appeared before the governor, the latter, after having questioned him, finding he could convince him of no crime, sent him to Herod. From all Herod had heard of Jesus, he had long eagerly desired to see him, and hoped to witness some miracle or other; so he put a number of questions to our Lord, who did not vouchsafe to answer any of them: then

he was treated as a lunatic, a madman, and became the laughing-stock of Herod's Court; every one loaded him with mockery and insults; and he was sent back to Pilate.

The divine Saviour was thus dragged along from street to street, from tribunal to tribunal, in the midst of insulting outcries. Of all the sick and maimed he had cured, the afflicted he had consoled, the poor he had helped, not one lifted up his voice to defend him. All disowned him, and even united with his enemies to insult him. At least one might suppose his beloved disciples would appear to assist or deliver him? Where are they? Alas! my children, Jesus is betrayed by one, denied by another, forsaken by all! O my Saviour! there is no kind of affliction thou hast not wished to bear for our salvation, and no doubt not the least cruel of thy sufferings were those caused by the desertion of thy friends, and the ungratefulness of those whose benefactor thou hast been!

Pilate, fully convinced of the innocence of Jesus, considered how he could deliver him. It was the custom every year, on the day of the feast of the Pasch, to grant at the petition of the people a free pardon to whatever prisoner the people should by their right choose. At that time there was in prison a man named Barabbas, accused of having committed murder.

When all were gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas or Jesus that is called the Christ? It was already for our Lord, my children, a great humiliation to be compared with a criminal, but think what he must have felt on hearing this malefactor preferred to him! For the princes of the people, having excited the multitude against Jesus, all exclaimed; "We want Barabbas!"—Pilate saith to them: "What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ?"—"Let him be crucified!"—"Why, what evil hath he done?" But they cried out only the more saying: "Let him be crucified." Then Pilate, seeing that he could not prevail against them, asked for some water, and washing his hands before the people said: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it." And the whole people answering said: "His blood be upon us and upon our children!"

Alas! my friends, this guilty wish has been but too well granted. Proscribed, persecuted during a long number of centuries, the unhappy Jews, are even to the present day without a country they can call their own: they are all wanderers on the face of the earth.

Pilate then released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him unto them to be crucified. But the fury of the enemies of Jesus was not appeased, and before crucifying him, they loaded him with fresh insults. The soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, scourged him and put a scarlet cloak about him; then plating a crown of thorns, they thrust it on his adorable head; then they struck him with a reed, and spitting upon him, they bowed down before him, and mocked at him, saying: "Hail, King of the Jews!" After having thus mocked our Lord, who remained calm and patient, his enemies laid a heavy cross on his shoulders, and led him on to Calvary to be crucified. His poor body, worn out by pain, covered with bleeding wounds, sunk under the burden of the cross. A man from Cyrene named Simon, who was passing on the road, was stopped and forced to carry the cross of Jesus.

Our Lord was followed by a great number of people, and by women who wept and showed great sorrow. Turning towards them he said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves!" Let us also, my children, if on this day our heart feels moved at the remembrance of such suffering, let us weep over ourselves, over our sins, which were the cause of Jesus Christ's sufferings.

At last our Lord reaches the place of execution, my children; his clothes are taken off; he is laid on the cross; he is nailed to it by driving large nails through his hands and feet, and the cross is set into the ground, between two other crosses, on each of which a thief is crucified. All those who passed by blasphemed against the Saviour; his meekness, his resignation, the agony he endured, could not disarm their wrath. Now from the sixth hour until the ninth there was darkness over the whole earth. About the ninth hour, the excess of his sufferings wrung from Jesus this heart-rending lamentation: "My God, my God, why

hast thou forsaken me?" But Jesus forgets his own sorrows to think of us. He sees his poor bereaved mother, and the well-beloved disciple, standing at the foot of the cross. So mustering all his strength, our Lord showing St. John to Mary said to her, "Woman, behold thy son." Then turning to St. John, showing Mary he said: "Behold thy mother." And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own house; since that moment also, my children, and thanks to this precious legacy of our dying Saviour, Mary loves us as her children, and we love her as our mother.

Death was fast approaching, and Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, bowed his head, saying: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,"—and he expired.

At the same instant, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, from one end to the other, the earth quaked, tombs burst open, and all nature was convulsed.

Ah! my children, words cannot express the feelings this picture ought to excite in our hearts. The tenderest of friends, our Redeemer, expires in torments for our salvation. We are the culprits, and it is he who bears the penalty we have incurred. Our sins and his love are the cause of such numberless sufferings. Let us remember this at the foot of the cross on this day; let us reflect on this every day of our life, so as to cling for ever to Jesus Christ, so as to renounce sin, for which he atones in such a cruel manner.

Good Friday is the only day of the year on which no Mass is said. The morning service begins by the reading of a lesson, taken from holy Scripture, and in which Moses explains the ceremony of the Paschal Lamb, which we may consider as a figure of our Lord's sacrifice. Another lesson, taken from Isaïas, contains to the fullest extent all the particulars of the Passion of Jesus Christ, so that while reading it one is led to imagine that it is rather the narrative of an eye-witness, than a prophecy, so minutely are the slightest circumstances related therein. These lessons are followed by the chanting of the Passion according to St. John. Thus, my children, the Church sets before us one after the other the Passion as figuratively related by Moses, the

prediction of the Passion by Isaias, and the narrative of the Passion by St. John. This reading of the Passion is followed by several prayers for the different orders of the Church, for the king, or head of the government in Catholic countries; for those who suffer or who are in affliction, for heretics, pagans and Jews. On this day on which our Lord dies for all men, the Church believes she can ask for boundless graces and implore him for her enemies. And in this manner she also wants to show us that no culprit, be he ever so criminal, should despair of obtaining his pardon by the merits of the death of Jesus Christ.

These prayers are followed by the adoration of the cross, a very touching and ancient ceremony. You understand, my children, that it is not the cross we adore, but our Lord who died on the cross, and whose sacred wounds the faithful respectfully kiss. Then the clergy go in procession silently, to adore the holy host placed in the tomb, and which after this adoration is taken from thence for the priest's communion. Vespers are then recited, not sung.

In the evening after *Tenebræ*, it is the custom in France, to sing the *Stabat Mater* in the chapel where the Blessed Sacrament reposed. The *Stabat*, my children, is one of the most beautiful and most moving hymns of the Church; it tells of the cruel sufferings endured by the Blessed Virgin at the foot of her divine Son's cross, and the feelings inspired by this hymn, piously end the sad emotions of this day.

NINETEENTH LESSON.

Holy Saturday.

“Buried with Christ in Baptism.”—ST. PAUL, Col. ii. 12.

The Church celebrates to-day the remembrance of our Lord in his sepulchre and descending into hell or limbo.

The Gospel tells us that on the day Jesus Christ died, when

it was evening, there came a certain rich man from Arimathæa named Joseph, who had taken no part with the Jews in their plot, for he was secretly a disciple of our Saviour, and he went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate having allowed him to take it from the cross, Joseph wrapped it up in a shroud and laid it in a new sepulchre which he had hewn out of a rock, and he rolled a great stone before the entrance of the sepulchre and went his way.

And the same day, the chief Priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate saying; "Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said while he was yet alive: 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come, and steal him away, saying to the people: 'He is risen from the dead.'" Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, guard it as you will." And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting guards near it.

The precautions of our Saviour's enemies were quite superfluous, my children, they could not impair his power; and in reality they only served to make the miracle of the resurrection still more wonderful. Whilst the sacred body of Jesus Christ rested in the sepulchre, his soul descended into hell, not, my friends, into that hell where the wicked receive the chastisement of their crimes, but in a place of rest, called also by the name of *limbo*, where the souls of the patriarchs and of all the righteous, who had died since the beginning of the world, were assembled together. These men had led virtuous and holy lives, they had been faithful to God, and yet they still remained away from heaven; for its gates had been closed to all men by the sin of Adam, and no one could re-enter them before the death of the Son of God had satisfied his Father's justice. Jesus Christ descended into hell for the delivery of these souls, who impatiently waited his coming. They followed their divine Redeemer to heaven the very day of his own glorious Ascension.

In the earliest ages of the Church, my children, it was the custom, on Holy Saturday, to baptize the catechumens, that is to say, those of the pagans who had been converted to the Christian

religion. To complete their religious instruction, during the service a great number of ceremonies took place as well as many pious lectures. The office of Holy Saturday has not been altered, though this day is now no longer specially set apart for conferring baptism. The priests go processionally to the baptismal font, to bless the water which during the year is to be made use of, for the administration of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism to little children. At this procession is carried a very large wax-taper, called the Paschal Candle, which has been solemnly blessed at the beginning of the ceremony; this wax-taper is the figure of Jesus Christ risen from the dead. It remains lit in church during the offices, till the feast of the Ascension, in commemoration of the time our Lord passed on earth after his resurrection. The fire with which the paschal candle is lit, is a new fire, that is to say, a fire that has not yet been made use of. The Priest blesses it with great pomp. Five grains of incense, in the shape of a cross, are fixed in the paschal candle, in remembrance of the five wounds of Jesus Christ, the marks of which he deigned to keep, even after he had risen from the tomb.

My children, at Mass on Holy Saturday, the Church begins to celebrate the triumph of Jesus Christ's resurrection, and rejoices beforehand at this event, so fruitful in its results for all Christians, so glorious for their divine Master; the bells, which have been unheard since the Mass on Maundy Thursday, ring out once more their joyful peals. The *Gloria in excelsis* sung by the angels at our Lord's birth, and never chanted by the Church in days of mourning and penance, now announce that second birth of Jesus Christ coming forth out of the tomb. Finally, under the arched roof of the house of prayer, resounds the joyful *Alleluia!* God be praised; and this cry of gratitude, uttered by the Hebrews when they were delivered from Egypt, becomes the Christian's cry of gratitude for our Saviour's deliverance, for their own deliverance, from sin, that most dire bondage.

My dear children, are you really disengaged from those bad habits, which are so many bonds holding you fast in the pangs of evil? To-day each faithful Christian ought to lay his sins, his

weaknesses, and his failings in the tomb of Jesus. If you have done so, you may then this morning, in church, sing with a full and gladsome heart the joyful Alleluia!

TWENTIETH LESSON.

Easter Day: A Day of Gladness.

"This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad, and rejoice therein."—PSALM CXVII. 24.

My dear children, this feast has always been considered as the first and most solemn of all those the Church celebrates during the year. It is the day of our Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection. In the ancient law, there was also a feast of Easter, and this name, which signifies *passover*, reminded the Hebrew people of the passage of the exterminating angel, and also of the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. Easter, in the new law, reminds all Christians, that Jesus Christ in his resurrection has passed from death to life. The history of this marvellous event is as follows:

Our Lord's body had been already two days in the closed tomb. On the morn of the third day, Mary Magdalen and several other holy women went to the sepulchre to anoint the body of Jesus Christ. It was a custom amongst the Jews: and these pious women wished to offer this last homage after death, to Him whose lessons they had listened to, and whose virtues they had admired. As they walked along, they asked one another if it would be possible for them to open the tomb, for its entrance was closed by an enormous stone. Great then was their surprise when, on drawing near, they perceived the stone rolled back; a young man was sitting near the sepulchre; his face was all radiant with a celestial brilliancy; his clothes were white as snow; "Be not affrighted;" saith he to them; "you seek Jesus of Nazareth: he is risen, he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. Go tell his disciples."

The holy women hastened to inform Peter, the chief of the apostles, and John, called in the Gospel the disciple Jesus loved. Both ran in great haste to the sepulchre; but the angel had disappeared, the tomb was empty, the burial cloth only remained. Overcome with terror at the Angel's apparition, announced by an earthquake, the soldiers appointed by Pilate to guard the sepulchre, had fallen down motionless; when they recovered their senses they fled in affright.

The two apostles hastened to tell the others of the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, and to prove the reality of this extraordinary event our Saviour made himself visible several times to his disciples, while they were assembled together.

The miracle of this resurrection, my dear children, is the most remarkable of all miracles. You will easily understand this. In the course of scriptural history, we are told that sometimes holy men, the prophet Elias for instance, had obtained from God the power of recalling life to the dead. Our Lord had also restored to life persons, either to show his power, or to give men a fresh proof of his love; but his own resurrection is still more miraculous. Yes, indeed, Jesus Christ rose from the dead by his own power, and he had foretold this miracle, when he said: "The son of man must be put to death, and the third day he will rise again."

His enemies refused to believe in the fulfilment of his prophecy; they had already triumphantly exulted over him when they saw him nailed to the cross saying: "He saved others; himself he cannot save; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in him!"—Even the faith of his disciples was shaken. They regretted Jesus Christ as a righteous man, they mourned for him as a friend; but they could hardly recognise a God in the being they had just seen put to death with so much suffering and ignominy. Therefore the news of the resurrection was received by them with no less surprise than admiration and joy.

My children, by his glorious resurrection, Jesus Christ most effectually proved his power and his divinity. He did more than come down from the cross; he rose alive from the tomb in which

he had been put. By this miracle Jesus Christ showed himself to be truly God;—indeed, without it our religion would not have existed.

That is why the feast of Easter is considered by the Church as the most important one of the year. The faithful crowd the churches with more than ordinary eagerness on this holy day, and we see the ministers of our worship arrayed in their most beautiful vestments in honor of Easter. The prayers set apart to celebrate this feast are all canticles of joy. All Christian countries make this day a time of rejoicing, and in some, when friends meet, they congratulate each other in these words: “Jesus Christ is risen”!

My dear children, will you be content with merely praising our Lord for the great victory he has won over death? No, certainly not. From this mystery you must learn a grand and useful lesson. Jesus in all the mysteries of his life has no other purpose in view than our sanctification. If he vouchsafed to become as one of us by taking upon himself the nature of man, it was to raise us to him, to show us the perfect being that man was destined to be, and which he should strive to become. If Jesus died on the cross, it was to teach us how to die a holy death; and finally, if he rose from the dead, it was to open the gates of Heaven for us, and make us partakers of his resurrection.

But you may say, how can we hope to gain such a blessed destiny? Can we then die and rise again during this life? No, my children, but we can correct our evil propensities, destroy them, pluck them from our hearts; and replace them by the opposite virtues. A lazy, disobedient, violent child, may become meek, painstaking, and obedient. He can thus begin a new life. That is what St. Paul calls stripping off the old man and putting on the new one. This is, my children, the kind of resurrection Jesus Christ expects of you in this world, in imitation of his own.

But your resurrection to a life of grace, besides being real and true, must have another quality, in order to bear a resemblance to that of your blessed Redeemer; it must be permanent, as His was permanent, for He rose so as to “die no more.”

TWENTY-FIRST LESSON.

On Obedience.

"Children, obey your parents in all this ; for this is well pleasing to the Lord."—St. Paul, Col. iii. 20.

Let us now return, my children, to a topic on which we have said but a few words ; let us speak of the virtue of obedience, this first and earliest virtue of childhood, a virtue so dear to our Saviour, that he practised it until death.

How much can be said to children about obedience ! and how little is this virtue understood even by those who believe they practise it, who imagine they are dutiful because they do not openly rebel against their parent's will, or against their master's orders ! These children obey, it is true, but slowly and unwillingly—they submit, but because they can hardly do otherwise. This obedience, so to say forced, is, I fear, without merit in God's eyes ; and cannot have any good effect on your temper.

The true obedience, of which Jesus Christ has left us a divine example, is prompt and entire, unaccompanied by remarks or murmurings.

To obey promptly, is to execute immediately the commands of our superiors—it is to obey directly, instead of putting off until the morrow, and making up our minds to obey merely from the fear of punishment. Remember, my children, how prompt was the obedience of Joseph and Mary, when warned by the Angel God sent them : they left Bethlehem with the infant Jesus, on a cold winter's night, and fled to Egypt.

To obey entirely, is to obey without reserve, and not merely to a certain point, and for some things only. What would be the merit of obedience, my dear children, if we were to perform a duty only when it has nothing unpleasant in it ? But to submit to all orders given, be they easy or difficult to accomplish, agreeable or tedious and painful, then is our obedience entire and generous.

Such was the obedience of Abraham when, by God's order,

he consented to immolate his only son. What a difference, my children, between the slight privations that are imposed on you, and the cruel sacrifice ordered to this poor father ! and yet how far is your obedience from the submission of Abraham !

To submit without a word, without arguing the point. Ah ! it is that above all which appears so very hard. You do not wish to resist your mother seriously, certainly not, but before obeying her, you raise a thousand difficulties, you give a thousand reasons ; it is a struggle, almost a quarrel, to free yourself from this duty of obedience, or at least to learn the reason, the why and the wherefore of everything ordered you : as if your parents, my children, were obliged to render you an account of the use they think fit to make of their authority.

It was not thus that young Samuel behaved in former times. One night, whilst sleeping in the Temple, he heard a voice, which cried three different times : Samuel ! Samuel ! It was God who spoke. But the child, ignorant as yet of the will of the Lord, supposed he was called by Eli the high priest, and he hurried to him, being each time sent back by the latter. Samuel, however, persisted, and without making a single remark on the order that must have seemed so strange to him, came back again and again, repeating : " Here I am, Father, because thou calledst me."

We will end by recommending you to obey without murmuring, that is to say without those complainings, which unwilling children indulge in, as it were to make up for the vexation of being compelled to obey. This unfortunate tendency generally leads to ill-temper, sometimes even gives rise to disrespectful answers, and if it does not lead to downright disobedience, it at least takes away all the merit of submission.

Did our Lord allow a single murmur to escape his lips ? Did he utter the slightest complaint, when, by his Father's will, he felt such excruciating tortures ? Why is your obedience, my dear children, so often compulsory, and wanting in the qualities we have just mentioned ? It is because your heart itself is not submissive, it is because all authority seems an annoyance to you. You are already impatient to reach the time when you

will be no longer children, thinking that then you will not be obliged to obey any one. All men, nevertheless, young or old, wealthy or poor, have superiors to whom they must submit. Children obey their parents and their teachers; wives their husbands, men the chiefs placed above them, servants their masters, subjects the king, Christians the Lord. Grown people, whose independence you envy, those at least who act rightly—and they are the only ones, I suppose, whom you would wish to resemble—grown people, when by some chance they have no superiors, still obey: they submit to duty, to reason, and that, my children, is often neither agreeable nor easy.

Since then, under all circumstances, and at all periods of your life, you must bend to the will of others, or to a sense of duty, begin early while it is yet easy to you to practise submission. May it please God, my dear children, that in the whole course of your life, you may never meet with more severe authority than that of your present superiors.

TWENTY-SECOND LESSON.

The Good Shepherd.

ST. LUKE XV. 1—10.

Suppose a man to have a hundred sheep, of which he takes great care. One of them is lost; it has gone astray into the wilderness, and is in danger of being torn by the wolf, or falling down a precipice. Does he not leave the ninety-nine other sheep, and go after that one? When he has found it, does he not take it on his shoulders, and bring it home joyfully? does he not call his neighbors to rejoice with him that the strayed sheep has been brought back safe? Now, such is the persuasive parable by which our Blessed Lord shows us His love for a penitent sinner. This is a lesson which the Church sets before us in the Gospel. In another place, our Lord draws out this lesson more fully, as you may read in the tenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. He

there calls Himself the Good Shepherd; and He proves His title by saying that He is even come to give His life for the sheep He loves so much. For our Lord did more for us than bring us home on His shoulders. On those Divine shoulders He bore for us the heavy Cross, along "the Way of the Cross," and up the weary hill of Calvary.

Hear how an ancient hymn addresses Him, regarding His saving Passion :

Beneath Thy Cross's weight foredone,
Stunned by Thy foes' malignant cries,
True Isaac, Thou, the Victim-Son,
Dost mount the pyre of Sacrifice.*

This was, indeed, the Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep. What unthankfulness for such a sacrifice, when they insist on breaking away from the fold, and straying back to the wilderness ! They richly deserve to fall into the jaws of the wolf.

This parable of the Good Shepherd made a deep impression on the early Christians who were under persecution, while Rome was still a heathen city ; when they had to burrow underground to save their lives. They lived, for days and weeks together, in subterranean passages, and heard Mass and received Communion in dark and close subterranean chapels : as wretched as could be, but consoled by the glorious hopes that belong to sufferers for Christ. To keep before their very eyes the tender love of the Good Shepherd, Who had brought them out of their heathen sins to the knowledge and love of Himself, they painted this image on the rocky walls of their living tomb. Nay, more. To show there was no sin so great that He would not pardon on sincere repentance and worthy fruits of penance, they painted Him sometimes as carrying a *goat*, not a sheep, on His shoulders. A goat ! that is, a sinner who would have found himself on the left hand of the Judge at the last day, unless the Lord Himself, the future Judge, had come to save him, and had given him grace to repent, and so to escape the judgment in store for impenitent souls.

* *Opprobriis, Jesu, satur,
Ligni fatiscens pondere, etc.*

How earnestly we should see to it, that we are true penitents, bringing forth worthy fruits of penance ; blotting out past sins with tears of true contrition ; "washing our robes, and making them white in the Blood of the Lamb."* That Sacred Blood of the Good Shepherd, as we know well, is poured over us in the Sacrament of Penance. However foul the soul may be, and deeply stained with sin, when the poor sinner goes into the confessional, yet let him only give a plain account of those sins, with a sincere desire that the priest should understand him, and with a determination to break them off, and break off the occasions that have led to them—he will find the Good Shepherd waiting for him in that confessional. The penitent may be more like a goat than a sheep ; nay, he may have been more like a wolf or a swine than either. That is not the question ; the question is this : Is he a humble penitent ? Has he done his best to make a real act of contrite sorrow ? Is he going to make it over again, while the Good Shepherd gives him absolution ? Has he striven to place before his conscience the great evil of sin, its dreadful punishment and doom, its ingratitude against the love of God and His goodness ? Will he leave it, and watch against it, for these motives ? Then the Good Shepherd is waiting for him in the confessional. He will bring him home on His shoulders ; home from the wilderness into which he has strayed, safe home from that cruel wolf, the devil, who opened his jaws for him ; home to His own fold, where saints and angels are waiting to receive him, and rejoice over him.

And now, if you follow that pardoned sinner out of the confessional to the altar-rails, and from thence to his home, to his family and his employments, surely you will see a changed man. You will see a man who is now as anxious to do good to others as he may have done harm to their souls. His words, his acts, his whole example, will show a carefulness, a sense that our Lord expects something from him, and has not pardoned him for nought. The word of Christ to those He forgives, is this : "Go, and now sin no more." "Sin no more, lest some worse thing

*Apoc. vii. 14.

happen to thee." "Go into thy house to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had mercy on thee."*

TWENTY-THIRD LESSON.

The Miraculous Draught of Fishes.

ST. LUKE V. I—II.

The Gospel represents to us our Blessed Lord standing on the shore of the lake, then entering the boat of Simon Peter, and teaching the multitudes from it. He wished to show, even so early in His public teaching, that St. Peter was chief of those Apostles by whose words He would instruct His Church to the end of time. Then Peter, James, and John are bidden by Him to launch out into the deep, and let down their nets for a draught. They had toiled all night in their fishing, and had caught nothing. Yet, "at Thy word," answered St. Peter, "I will let down the net." "When they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke." The fish were taken in such numbers, that two boats were nearly sinking with the weight of them. Simon Peter, overawed by such tokens of Divine presence and power, "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying : Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. . . And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things they followed Him."

A second time our Lord worked the same miracle ; and that was after His Resurrection. St. Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, with St. Thomas and Nathaniel, were fishing all night again, and again they caught nothing. Jesus, standing on the shore, and concealing His glory, bade them cast the net on the right side of the ship, and they should find. "They cast therefore ; and now they were not able to draw it, for the multitude of

* St. John viii. 11 ; v. 14. St. Mark v. 19.

fishes." Then the disciples knew it was Jesus. When they landed, He gave to St. Peter the charge so well-known to us all, that he should feed all his flock, sheep and lambs alike, teachers and taught. This universal charge He repeated thrice.

Now, from these two miracles, we learn that all our best efforts can do nothing towards saving our souls, without the grace of God, and without obedience to His direction. Secondly, we learn, as St. Paul says that we can *do all things*, through Christ who strengthens us. The three Apostles, and then again the five, toiled all night, and took nothing. How many people's lives are described in these few words! They toil, and toil, and wear themselves out, and at the end of their little span of life they find their hands very empty: why? Because they have toiled, trusting in their own strength, and so have failed. Or because they toiled by a rule they chose by their own self-will. Or because they did not begin with a right and pure intention. This is like casting the net on the wrong side of the ship, and so taking nothing. A good confessor is a far better guide in our case than we can be to ourselves. So let us cast the net on the right side of the ship; let us ask our spiritual guide how to cast it, and teach us to direct the throw.

In the second place, if we do this, and act earnestly, with perseverance, we may take such a multitude of fishes, that it may seem miraculous. The greatest things have been done in the Kingdom of God by those who seemed the least, and the least likely. Who were the Apostles, themselves, when our Lord called them? Poor fishermen. What unlikely men to overthrow the religion of the great Roman Empire! "God," says St. Paul, "has chosen the weak things of the world, that He may confound the strong;" and base things, contemptible things, and things that are not—and why all this? "That no flesh should glory in His sight."* St. Teresa was going to build a convent; but she had only half a ducat to begin with. Yet she began; and finished it, too. "For," said the Saint; "Teresa and half a ducat are not much; but Teresa and half a ducat, with Almighty God to help, are a great deal."

* 1 Cor. i. 27—29.

So, let us cast the net on that side of the ship pointed out by obedience to our spiritual guide. This is good fishery; and thus, instead of toiling in vain, we may draw a great many fish to land. We shall secure our own salvation and that of others; for our Lord will have made us "fishers of men"—not, indeed, like the Apostles, by preaching and miracles, but by consistent good example, by a wholesome word in season, and by persevering prayer of intercession for all whom we know to be in need of our prayers. We must intercede for others humbly, all the while, as those who are not worthy to be heard even for themselves. So we shall not be like those proud fishermen, of whom the word of God says, that they "sacrifice to their net." * We shall acknowledge that if our prayers are heard, it is through our Lord's mere goodness. But if we succeed only with some small fishes, yet what a joy to bring souls to the feet of Jesus on His throne!

TWENTY-FOURTH LESSON.

The Steward's Foresight.

ST. LUKE xvi. 1—9.

There was a certain rich man, who had a steward; and he was informed that this steward had defrauded him. He therefore gave him warning, and demanded his accounts. The steward, foreseeing that he would be dismissed, had the prudence to curry favor with his master's debtors, and thus secured friends for himself, who would receive him into their houses. He called them together, and proposed to them to falsify their accounts, and make out their debts to his master to be less than they were. When his master heard of his device, however angry he was at being cheated, he could not but feel a certain admiration for the man's foresight and worldly wisdom. Our Lord spoke this parable, and gave the interpretation of it. He pointed out

* Hab. i. 16.

to His disciples, that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." That is, people who are careless about securing their salvation, are often very careful to secure their interests here below. They cast about to find means to advance their good estate and prosperity. They try to secure "friends at court," as the saying is; rich benefactors, powerful protectors and patrons, and they will cringe to flatter them, and do all kinds of mean things to secure their favor. They are "wise in their generation," for they take means to succeed, and succeed they do; and they are "wiser than the children of light," for they take more forethought and pains, and undergo greater self-denials, to make a fortune, and to rise in the world, than would have made them inherit a throne in the eternal happiness of Heaven. Blessed Thomas More said it even more strongly. His words were, in effect that many men take more pains to go to Hell, than would have secured their passage to glory. The great minister of a celebrated King of France said bitterly, on his death-bed: "If I had done for God what I have done for that man,* I should have been saved three times over; and now, I know not what is going to become of me." So much for the children of this world. On the other hand, what are "the children of light" doing? They, too, have to make friends for the future; yes, for an eternal future in the world to come. "I say to you," our Lord concludes, "make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings." Mammon is a word for money, or wealth. Our Lord speaks of it as the mammon of iniquity, because it is so generally an agent in human sin. But gold is God's creature, not evil in itself. It is like the steel of which you may make a knife, or a sword. You may turn that instrument or that weapon to a good purpose, or to a bad. And so it is with gold and silver. We may prepare for ourselves everlasting blessings with money, either in Heaven or in Hell. What does Judas now think of his thirty pieces of silver? Or the wicked rich man, of all he spent on his purple and fine linen, and his daily sumptuous banquets? On the other hand, is it not

* Louis XIV.

now a joy to St. Charles Borromeo, to remember how, while he was on his trial for eternity, he sold an estate for forty thousand gold pieces, and gave away that sum to the poor in a single day? and how he did the same with twenty thousand more, that came to him by a legacy? With what rejoicing was he welcomed into the "everlasting habitations" by his "friends," the poor whom he had benefited?

Then remember the cup of cold water, and the widow's two mites that make a farthing. Remember, too, how much you can do by *spiritual* almsgiving. No one is so poor in *time*, that he cannot spend many moments in the day, praying for others. As we walk to and fro, about our daily duties; in little odd fragments of time which no one observes, and no one grudges us—moments that otherwise we might be spending in frivolous talk or idle thoughts—we may be praying for the conversion of sinners, for the success of zealous priests and nuns in their apostolic work, for the Holy Father, the poor souls in Purgatory, for sufferers, for the tempted, and the dying. Not one little ejaculation of such spiritual mercy will be forgotten before God. "When we fail," and are dying away out of life, we shall know it.

TWENTY-FIFTH LESSON.

Ascension Day.

"Jesus is entered into heaven itself, that he may appear now in the presence of God for us."—ST. PAUL, Heb. ix. 24.

After his glorious resurrection, Jesus Christ remained on earth during forty days; but he did not live in the same manner as before his passion. Then his body was subject to suffering, and was mortal like ours, my children, subject to the same wants and the same sufferings, but after rising from the tomb, our Lord's body became immortal, impassible, that is to say no longer subject to pain or death. Instead of living constantly

amongst men, as he had hitherto, he only appeared to them now and then, and always in a sudden and miraculous way. At one time he appeared by the sea-side, when the Apostles were about to cast their nets ; at another, on the road from Jerusalem to the little village of Emmaus, or else in the midst of his assembled disciples. And Jesus Christ addressed to them these words so full of kindness which he repeated continually : " Peace be with you."

These soothing words, the sound of his well-known voice, were yet insufficient to make the disciples believe in the presence of the Saviour ; some of them, still affrighted by his sudden apparition, supposed they saw a phantom. To reassure them he said : " It is I, fear not . . . handle me, and see : for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have !"

He also showed them his feet and hands, which still retained the marks of the nails by which they had been pierced ; then he would sit down and eat with the apostles ; and the latter recognized him by his way of breaking and blessing the bread. Thus it was, my children, that our Lord at length succeeded in convincing the most incredulous of his disciples of the miracle of his resurrection.

It was for this purpose Jesus Christ passed forty days on earth ; it was also to establish his Church, the Catholic Church, whose children we have the happiness to be.

After having completed the divine instructions he had already given the apostles, our Lord ordained that these instructions should be transmitted to the successors of the apostles, and preached throughout the whole world ; at the same time, he promised never to forsake his Church, nor to allow it to err.

My children, Jesus Christ had redeemed man by his death and his sufferings, furthermore, he had enlightened him by his word ; and established his Church to teach and expound his law. Having thus foreseen all our wants ; provided us with remedies for our ailings ; relief for our misery, consolations in our sufferings ; our Saviour brought his divine mission to an end. The time had now come for him to return to his kingdom, and in his sacred humanity to take possession of heaven, so as to glorify it.

In order to prepare the Apostles for this approaching separation, he had already said to them: "My little children, I have but a few days to remain with you—a little while, and then you shall see me no more." And as, at their master's word, sorrow filled the hearts of the Apostles, Jesus Christ added: "I will not leave you orphans. . . . And I will pray my Father, and he will send you the Paraclete, the spirit of truth, that he may abide with you for ever. . . . If you love me, keep my commandments. I am going, but I will come to you again, and your heart shall rejoice: I am going to prepare you a seat in heaven."

On the fortieth day after his resurrection, my children, Jesus Christ ascended gloriously to heaven. By his order, the disciples were assembled on Mount Olivet near Jerusalem. The Gospel relates that there, the Lord Jesus gave them his last advice, said his last farewell, stretched out once more his divine hands to bless them, and in so doing was raised up to heaven. As the Apostles still gazed after him, trying to catch another glimpse of him, even after a cloud had hidden him from their sight, two angels clothed in white suddenly appeared, saying:—"Ye men of Galilee, why stand **you** looking up to heaven?—this Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him ascend." Then the Apostles threw themselves on the ground, and adored the Son of God **entering** into his glory, followed by the souls of the righteous he had delivered, and surrounded by innumerable choirs of angels.

These words addressed to the Apostles, refer to the last judgment, which is to take place at the end of the world. Then, for the second time, Jesus Christ will descend on earth; he will come no more as our Saviour, but as our judge. We shall see no more the poor child of Bethlehem, the friend of sinners, the God who died on Calvary, but a just and severe king, who will give to each according to his deeds. Let us, by a holy life, prepare for this last coming of Jesus Christ. My dear children, may it in our thoughts be never separated from his triumph, from this glorious Ascension, the anniversary of which we celebrate to-day.

TWENTY-SIXTH LESSON.

Our Lord's Tears over Jerusalem.

ST. LUKE xix. 41—47.

Our Lord, on His last entrance into Jerusalem before He suffered, willed to enter the city in triumph. Perhaps it was to encourage His disciples, who were so shortly afterwards to see Him in the hands of His enemies ; perhaps it was to show how little we ought to reckon on the esteem or favor of men, who will cry *Hosanna*, "the Lord preserve you !" one day, and "Crucify Him, crucify Him !" the next. But, amid the shouts of the multitude, who spread their garments on His path, and cut down branches from the trees, to strew them as a tribute of honor, when He came in sight of Jerusalem, He wept. The tender Heart of the God-man, Emmanuel, was moved with compassion and sorrow over the city. And why ? "If thou also hadst known"—this was His voice of lamentation—"if thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace ! but now they are hidden from thine eyes." Then he foretold the horror and distress of the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman Emperor, and its destruction at last, so that one stone should not be left upon another, because of the blindness, and hardness of heart, and impenitence, of its children. All this was to come, "because," He said, "thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."

Now, this is for our instruction. Jerusalem represents a soul in sin ; and, what is worse, unconscious of its sin ; sinning on, without remorse, sinning as a habit, growing less pricked by conscience as time goes by, and its sins are repeated. This state is described by the Apostle as "having the conscience seared ;" * that is, burnt as with a hot iron, which is painful at the time, but leaves the flesh hard and insensible. Such a soul neither sorrows for its past offences, nor for its present condition, nor fears for its impending doom. It is like the prophet Jonas, who, in

*1 Tim. iv. 2.

the midst of the storm which his own disobedience had raised, was fast asleep in the ship's hold. He needs a special call of grace to cry to him, as the ship's captain cried in the ear of Jonas: "Why art thou fast asleep? Rise up; call upon thy God!" * This fatal peace is the most perilous condition. Travellers in the snow, if they yield to the slumber that creeps over them from the cold, if they lie down, are frozen to death. They have to be up, and keep moving; they must take some vigorous steps homewards. And the impulse to do this, is what our Lord speaks of as their "time of visitation." There are special times of grace, like a higher tide than usual, that floats off the boat stranded on the beach, and makes it swim again. Our Lord speaks with all His sweetness and persuasion by the pen of St. John, His beloved disciple, the very Apostle of Divine love. "Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." † But the man within, the sinner we are speaking of, must rise up and open the door; that is plain. Otherwise, our Lord passes by, and the day of visitation also passes away. He goes to some other door; perhaps to the very next door: to some one who will listen to His voice, and open to Him, and be saved.

How solemn and stirring are these truths! A sinner may be forgetting his sins, till he is within the very jaws of Hell. He wakes up suddenly, as at the blast of a trumpet. He then summons the priest to his side; what sort of confession shall we suppose him to make? That long-hardened heart; is it likely to melt with true contrition, or even to be touched with true attrition, the less perfect kind of sorrow? Can it do this, at a moment's notice? By a special mercy, it may; but there must often be cause to fear for such a case, that it is a mere natural dread of torments that drives it to the Sacrament. At all events, the time of *our* visitation is *now*. "Behold, now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the day of salvation;" ‡ this is

* Jonas i. 6.

† Apoc. iii. 20.

‡ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

the Church's voice, borrowed from the Apostle. One of the causes of our Blessed Lord's agony in the garden; when He shed, not tears, but the dreadful sweat of Blood, was to see the multitudes who would insist on losing their undying souls, in spite of all He was come to suffer for them. Let us not be among the number. Let us know "the time of our visitation." What is there about us, what in our lives, that would make us most anxious, if the summons were now to come? To-day is ours; to-morrow may be out of our grasp. We may be in eternity; or the grace we have delayed to accept, may have passed to some other. Let us awake, and dream no longer.

TWENTY-SEVENTH LESSON.

Pentecost or Whit-Sunday.

"The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send, he will teach you all things."—ST. JOHN xiv. 26.

My children, after Jesus Christ's Ascension the Apostles were cast down with sorrow. The absence of their kind Master grieved them so deeply, that nothing could console them. Nevertheless they waited with confidence the fulfilling of our Lord's last promise; I will not leave you orphans, had Jesus Christ said before ascending to heaven, I will send you from the Father the Paraclete, the Spirit of consolation.

No doubt, my dear children, this promise might have been fulfilled immediately; but God willed to wait a few days, and thus put the apostles' faith to the test; moreover, he desired that the descent of the Holy Ghost in their souls should be attended by such wonderful circumstances, as to make his power appear all the more transcendent in the sight of all nations.

Ten days had passed since the Ascension, the Apostles, shut up in the upper chamber with the blessed Virgin, who had wished to remain with them, had passed that time in prayer and pious retirement. Suddenly a noise is heard from heaven, like

that of a high wind; it approaches: it fills the whole house in which the Apostles are assembled. There appeared then a shining light, which shaping itself into tongues of fire, rested on the head of each of the Apostles, and all were filled with the Holy Ghost. At the same time they received the gift of languages, that is to say, by a miracle of the divine Spirit, they knew all at once how to speak the different languages of all the nations to whom they were to go and preach the Gospel.

A less visible miracle, but a no less striking one, took place in their hearts. These men, so timid, so weak, so irresolute, who had so cowardly forsaken Jesus Christ at the time of his Passion, become steadfast, courageous, dauntless; and the Holy Ghost, who is also the Spirit of strength, gave them the courage required to accomplish, even at the risk of their lives, the divine mission entrusted to them.

We also, like the Apostles, are elected to receive the Holy Ghost with all his gifts, in the sacrament of Confirmation. On the day chosen for you to receive this sacrament, my dear children, you will not, indeed, see tongues of fire appear above your heads, but you will receive the spiritual grace, of which this miracle was the sign. You will not receive the gift of all languages, which would be useless to you; but God will vouchsafe to inspire you with the language you are to make use of under all circumstances, so as to render a due homage to religion, to truth, and never to be wanting in charity towards others. At that time, my children, you will receive detailed instructions on the sacrament of Confirmation; at present you can meditate on it with benefit to your soul; and it is particularly on this day that you ought to do so. In the first place, try to understand what is meant by receiving the Holy Ghost. It means to have our minds filled with the Spirit of God, who being a Spirit of Truth, of Holiness, and of Strength, should make us more upright, more pious, and more steadfast Christians.

This Spirit is infinitely superior to ours: and on that account gives us its supernatural strength. We are but as little children in the eyes of God, and just as a dutiful child, who in the ordinary occurrences of daily life, allowing himself to be guided

by his parents, reaps the benefit of their experience, of their wisdom, and by degrees shakes off the weakness and ignorance of his infancy, so our soul, strengthened, enlightened, and transformed by the Holy Ghost, is enriched at last by the full enjoyment of his precious gifts.

The gifts of the Holy Ghost, that on this day he lavishes so abundantly on the Apostles are : Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and the Fear of the Lord. These different gifts would be of great value to you, my children ; ask them of God. Above all, pray him to grant you Wisdom, from which it is said all good deeds spring ; also that Fortitude so necessary at your age, so that you may succeed in getting the better of your evil propensities, and work earnestly at the great doing of your salvation ; and last of all Piety, by which you will learn to love prayer, and feel yourself truly happy in God's service.

May these holy sentiments penetrate deeply into your hearts, my dear children, for then indeed will the feast of Pentecost, like the good seed in the Gospel, bring forth fruit to a hundred fold, and you will be well prepared to receive hereafter the sacrament of Confirmation.

TWENTY-EIGHTH LESSON.

The Most Holy Trinity.

ST. MATT. xxviii. 18—20.

To-day is Trinity Sunday. The Church sets apart this day that we may consider the great truth, the foundation of all Christian truth, that in One God there are Three Divine Persons—Three Divine Persons in One God. We are not called upon to understand this mystery, but to believe it. A mystery, is something we cannot understand. But each and every one of the mysteries which the Church declares to be parts of the Faith, we are to believe, if we desire to be saved. Almighty

God, the Author of all truth, cannot be indifferent whether people believe His truths or not. He would not have revealed them, and made them known by His Church, if they were matters of indifference. It is quite as much a sin to disbelieve His truths, the articles of His creeds, as it is to break His commandments : and the sin of doing so will just as surely be punished in Hell for ever, unless the unbeliever repents of his sin. This is what people are now-a-days very slow to think ; and many refuse to think it. They call it narrow, slavish, and so forth. But it is true, because God is True, and the very Truth.

The word Trinity means Tri-unity ; that is, Three in One. We all know that God the Father, the First Person, is the Father of God the Son, the Second Person ; but perhaps we do not often reflect upon the mystery I am now going to speak of. The mystery is, that the Father is not more eternal than the Son, nor the Son less eternal than the Father. The Paternity or Fatherhood of the First Person, and the Sonship of the Second Person, never had a beginning, never will have an end. They are equally eternal ; or, as the Athanasian Creed says, Co-eternal. For there is no growth, no progress, no increase, no lessening, no change, in God. Through all eternity, and infinitely before anything we can imagine of eternity, the Father was always, as He is always, and ever will be, the Father of the Son ; and the Son was always, and is always, and ever will be, the Son of the Father. There is the same degree of profound mystery in the truths regarding the Third Person, God the Holy Ghost. He proceedeth from the Father and the Son. The love which the Father has for his co-equal and co-eternal Son, and the Son for the Father, is a love so infinite and divine, that the breathing forth of that love, (to use poor human language,) is the proceeding of the Divine Spirit from Both. What has just been said about the eternity of the Fatherhood of the Father and the Sonship of the Son, is equally true of this Procession forth from Both. The Adorable Spirit thus proceeding, never had a beginning, never will have an end, is subject to no progress or alteration. The Procession is simply one act, eternal, changeless, and divine.

My dear children, if any of you, listening to this statement of Catholic truth, is disposed to say: "How can these things be? How can the Son be as eternal as the Father, if He is His Son? How can the Holy Spirit be as eternal as Those from Whom He Proceeds?" I say, in answer: Wait till you are in Heaven, if you are so happy as to arrive there, and then you will know.

St. Paul says: "We see now through a glass, in a dark manner; but then, face to Face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know, even as I am known." * And St. John says: "We shall see Him as He is." † It is impossible for our weak eyes to gaze up steadily at the sun in his noontide strength; we should be blinded. But if we take a smoked glass, and hold it up, we can see the sun's outline with an unwounded eye. Faith gives us the outline; clear, distinct, not to be mistaken. The glorious sight of the Divine truth, with all the splendor of its rays, remains for hereafter. It will form a chief part of the happiness of Heaven thus to "see Him as He is." It will make us even grow "like Him," as St. John says. ‡ This is called the Beatific Vision—the sight that makes the beholder blessed; the sight which eternity will not be too long to gaze upon, and where the glorified saints will find endless happiness and beauty.

How we ought to love and thank, as well as to revere, the Adorable Trinity, when the Father sent His well-beloved Son to redeem us by His agonizing death, and when the Son "was offered up, because He willed it Himself," and when the Holy Spirit loves to dwell within us, and makes our very bodies His temples, § unless by sin we forbid Him to dwell there. We can "grieve the Spirit:" || we can "quench ¶ the Spirit," by sin. But "if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy." ††

If we could form a just estimate of the tenderness and extent of charity with which God has loved us, we should be constantly endeavoring to return love for love to God, who has made such immense sacrifices for the love of us.

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12

† 1 St. John iii. 2.

‡ 1 St. John iii. 2.

§ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

|| Ephes. iv. 30.

¶ 1. Thess. v. 19.

†† 1. Cor. iii. 7.

TWENTY-NINTH LESSON.

Corpus Christi.

"My delights are to be with the children of men."—PROV. viii. 31.

You remember, no doubt, my children, that on the eve of our Saviour's death, during the last supper he took with his Apostles, he instituted the holy sacrament of Eucharist, that holy sacrament by which God really dwells with man, and condescends to humble himself in giving his own divine body and blood as food to his guilty creatures. Every year on Maundy Thursday the Church celebrates the remembrance of that blessed day on which Jesus Christ gave us this proof of his love; but then the Church is so sadly engrossed by the sufferings and the Passion of our Lord, that she cannot give herself up as much as she desires, to rejoice for such a great boon conferred on mankind; she has therefore established a special feast in honor of the Blessed sacrament. This feast is one of the greatest and most affecting of all religious feasts: it is the feast of God's love for us and of our gratitude towards God. My dear children, it is the custom, on this day, both in towns and in the country, to go in solemn procession outside the church, and to bear in triumph the Blessed Sacrament. At early morn, the bells have already begun to ring out their most joyful peals; the inhabitants eagerly strew flowers and boughs or leaves of trees over the streets by which the procession is about to pass, and prepare the altars at which the procession will rest awhile. In towns, the wealthy lend tapestries and splendid curtains, in the country white linen looped up with flowers, are the only hangings which the poor peasants of the village have at their disposal; but no one doubts that all these offerings, be they of more or less value, are equally acceptable in the eyes of Jesus. Is he not the God of the poor and of the rich, the Master of heaven and of earth? What he asks for especially is the free offering of the heart.

The procession comes out of the church and winds along,

amidst the singing of hymns; the Priests are clothed in their handsomest vestments, the acolytes mingle with the smoke of incense showers of rose leaves, which they carry in pretty baskets. We may compare the scene, to the triumphal march of some mighty sovereign whose devoted subjects throng around him, or to one of those happy family meetings where children and relations eagerly surround a beloved parent on his birthday.

God is never more ready to lavish his graces on us than on this holy day, when he comes out of his tabernacle to be amongst us; all throng to greet him on his passage, and thrice happy is he before whose dwelling the holy Sacrament has passed; the husbandman hopes to reap a plentiful harvest from the fields blessed by the presence of Jesus Christ; the poor invalids, if they can rise from their beds of suffering, draw near the windows, await there God's blessing, which often cures them, and certainly consoles them. Mothers with their infants in their arms, kneel on the altar steps, where our Lord condescends to stop and bless them; and whilst he rests on the innocent heads of these little angels, it seems as if he said to his ministers, as he did formerly to his disciples: Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

My dear children, nearly all of you have received in your early years this blessing of Jesus Christ; then you could not understand your happiness; but now that you begin to know the value of the holy Eucharist, be pious and fervent during this beautiful feast; thank God a thousand times for showing you such great love, and love him yourselves with all your heart.

THIRTIETH LESSON.

The Pharisee and The Publican.

ST. LUKE xviii. 9—14.

In the Gospel, our Lord contrasts the proud, vain-glorious prayer of the Pharisee with the humble, contrite petition of the publican. And He declares that "this man," that is, the publi-

can, whatever might have been his former sins, "went down to his house, justified rather than the other," notwithstanding all the deeds the Pharisee boasted of having done. Why was this? Our Lord Himself tells us: "Because every one who exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."

Let us see what kind of prayer the Pharisee put up to God. It was rather a boast than a prayer. "O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men." If he had stopped at the first part, giving God thanks for having escaped every sin he had really escaped, it might have been a good act of devotion. Saints and devout souls always remember, that if they have escaped any sins, it has been by the grace of God, and that they are bound to give Him thanks for it. But the after part of the Pharisee's prayer spoilt all; for he goes on to compare himself favorably with others; he "was not as the rest of men." So we see, there is a proud thanksgiving, and a humble thanksgiving. A holy man once heard a noise in the street; and looking out at his window, he saw a malefactor being dragged to execution with a rope round his neck. "There," he said, "go I, but for the grace of God." He felt, that if God, the Author of all grace and goodness, withdrew that grace from him, he might become the worst of men. And so ought we to know this, too; it is a knowledge to keep us very humble, and very careful to preserve ourselves in a state of grace.

The Pharisee was also guilty of rashly judging his neighbor. I am not a sinner, said he, as this publican is. How did he know anything about him? Even if he knew him for a sinner when he came into the Temple to pray, he knew nothing of the working of Divine grace in his soul while the publican prayed so humbly. Nor do *we* know in what state Almighty God sees this soul, or the other soul, to be. We see one another, as a child might see the dial-plate of a clock, and know little of what is working within. Some clocks that seem highly finished, may be very near stopping, through some hidden fault in the works. Others, with less show outside, may be found up to time at last. There may be hidden Saints whom we are in the way of ignor-

ing, if not despising them : for they who love God most, and serve Him best, are the most careful to conceal their love and service from observation. "Therefore," St. Paul says, "judge not before the time ; until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts ; and then shall every man have praise from God." * Every one who has really loved, and therefore served Him, not serving to the eye, as pleasing men,† shall then have praise from Himself, whose praise will then be : "Come, ye blessed of My Father."‡

Our Divine Lord finishes this parable by laying a broad foundation truth belonging to His Gospel. "Every one who exalteth himself, shall be humbled : and he who humbleth himself, shall be exalted." This was unknown to the world before He came, with the teaching on His lips : "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."§ The reason of this truth is plain. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."|| Now, to have God against us, means, to be left to ourselves ; and to be left to ourselves, means, to fall into sin. On the contrary, to be humble, means, to pray for grace ; and to pray for grace means, to receive it. Therefore, "Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened to you."¶ If we may always have confidence, "that, whatsoever we shall ask according to His will, He heareth us,"** then especially may we be sure, when we ask for the grace to be kept in His love and service, and to increase in them. Let us always ask, like the publican, who felt himself unworthy to be heard : "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Our Lord will then smile on our petition. We shall go down to our house, justified rather than the self-confident Pharisee. We shall be more secure of receiving further grace, and more hopeful of being enabled to persevere in grace to the end.

* I Cor. iv. 5.

† Col. iii. 22.

‡ St. Matt. xxv. 34.

§ St. Matt. v. 3.

|| St. James iv. 6 ; † St. Peter v. 5. ¶ St. Matt. vii. 7. ** † St. John v. 14

THIRTY-FIRST LESSON.

On Good Example.

“Let all things be done to edification.”—ST. PAUL, 1 COR. xiv. 26.

Those amongst you, my children, who are the eldest of their family, have duties to perform towards their younger brothers and sisters; the first of these duties is to set a good example.

All children, and particularly the younger ones, imitate most easily whatever is done before them; and as they have not discernment enough to distinguish good from evil, it is very important never to do anything wrong before them, for fear that, in imitating you, they contract bad habits, which at a later period might become real defects. You owe this good example, not only to very little children, but also to those who are nearer to you in age, to your companions, to your friends. No doubt, they are not obliged to imitate the faults they see you commit, and their duty, like yours, is to take example of what is good; but the child who is often wanting in courage to perform a duty, particularly when it depends on the sacrifice of what is agreeable, is still more easily drawn on by bad example, and the wrong done by others seems to serve as an excuse for his own faults. What is the result of this, my friends? That those that have given this bad example have been doubly guilty, first of all, guilty on their own account, for evil is forbidden them, guilty also for having taught others to commit evil.

There is one thing, children give much more easily than good example, and that is advice. The child who has the most faults speaks often very highly of the qualities he has not, and whenever an opportunity offers, he knows how to reproach his brother with a fault he himself commits every day. Are there not many things to say to this little giver of advice? First of all, since you know so perfectly what is wrong, are you not all the more inexcusable if you are not better behaved? then, should you not correct yourself before wishing to correct others? In a word, is not example more efficacious than advice? Do you want to

know the reason of this, my children? It is because our vanity is easily wounded by observations made on our behavior, it is because we do not much like to have certain truths told us, it is especially because a child cannot bear to be found fault with by another child. It would, in truth, be much better to benefit by good advice, without minding from whence it came: but are children always wise? You, in particular, you, who find fault with others, are you wiser than they?

Do not then reproach your little friends; only at such time, and as often as would be really useful; try rather to give them good example, which, without paining them, may induce them to do better.

And in order to be sure, my dear children, of never giving your brothers any but good example to follow, begin by following yourselves the virtuous examples you have under your eyes. Imitate those which are given you by your parents and by the good and well-behaved children with whom you are acquainted; remember too the affecting and beautiful models offered in holy Scripture, the piety of Abel, the love and kindness Joseph showed his brothers, the filial tenderness of Tobias, the submission of Isaac and Samuel, and above all, the divine childhood of Jesus Christ.

THIRTY=SECOND LESSON.

Duties Towards Our Inferiors.

An instruction for the children of the rich.

“Masters, do to your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that you also have a master in heaven,”—ST. PAUL, COL. iv. 1.

Our inferiors are those whom it has pleased God to place by their birth in a less happy position than ourselves, who not having received from providence sufficient fortune to live upon, earn a living, either by some trade like the workman, or by entering

the service of some richer family, as servants. Children at your age are not in fact the superiors of any one. Nevertheless, it is not unusual to meet with children who, taking advantage of their parents' excessive indulgence, become, at home, masters full of haughtiness and impertinence—indeed, sometimes towards those who wait upon them, complete little tyrants, who insist upon their slightest caprices being instantly attended to. It is advisable to teach children, thus blinded by a guilty and foolish pride, and even those whose good heart renders them more humane and more just, how they ought to behave towards servants.

How very sad and painful, my dear children, is the condition of servants! Have you ever thought of this? And yet who ought to be more struck by this than you? who find it so hard to obey those orders which are given you kindly and tenderly; you of whom nothing is required but for your own welfare, nothing that does not contribute to your own happiness? How different is your lot, my children, to that of your servants! You obey parents by whom you are loved, they the will of masters who are strangers to them, of masters who are often unjust or at least severe, who have trying tempers, who are difficult to please, whimsical, capricious, and yet they must submit to all, without murmuring, with patience, for fear of losing their situation, and perhaps falling a prey to poverty!

I know there are many good and Christian families where servants are treated with justice, with kindness; but even the happiest of these poor people are much to be pitied! In the morning, my children, whilst you are still asleep, the servants have to get up early, to begin their house-work; before taking their meals, they have prepared yours; when you are shut up in the carriage that covers you, they are outside, exposed to the bad weather; and the winter evenings, which seem so short to those who amuse themselves, how long must they not appear to those poor servants, who, wet through, or else frozen by the cold, wait for their masters in the street?

We are apt to think that, as we pay our servants, we owe them nothing more; but we owe them that money, their wages, my children, and in fact it does not ameliorate their position. Who

knows if they do not share, with an aged father or mother, the fruit of their labor? And again, who knows if, in a laudable spirit of prudence, they do not put by some money in store for their own old age, when they in turn will need the services of others.

If it does not depend upon us, my children, entirely to change the sad condition of servants, at least it lies in our power to render that condition less hard. In the eyes of humanity, they are our equals; in God's eyes they are our brethren: consequently, we owe them justice, care, and affection.

This is the way a child may already fulfill, in his father's house, some of these important duties.

Never speak to servants but with politeness and kindness; take care not to let them be scolded; excuse them when it is possible; spare them, in a word, all useless labor.

I must tell you now, my friends, that kindness is not familiarity: at your age, you often mistake one for the other. It is allowed, it is even a duty for each of us, to keep our place—the place Providence has marked out for us—and which we have not chosen for ourselves. The familiarity you sometimes allow yourselves to show to servants is not proper; long conversations prevent them from doing their work, and may cause less inconvenience to them than to you. Try to understand this perfectly, and not make this a pretext for haughtiness, which, as I told you before, would be quite misplaced, and would be particularly unworthy of a kind heart.

There was an unfortunate time, my children, the time of the first revolution in France, when many persons of high station in life had to congratulate themselves on having gained, by good treatment, the affection of their servants. At that sad period, during which so many families emigrated, more than one fortune was saved by faithful servants, and given back untouched to those to whom it belonged, when they obtained leave to return to France. More than one hunted nobleman found, under his servant's humble roof, a shelter which saved his life. Many of these good people shared their master's lot, and accompanied them in their exile.

My grandmother told me, but never without tears in her eyes, how during the revolution she and her children were supported for several months by two devoted women, then in her service, and who, seeing her without any resource, offered her their little savings. In the present time, my dear children, you may still meet with traits of similar generosity, traits which do honor to the poorer classes, showing us that among them can be found good and noble hearts. The prizes founded in France by Mr. de Montyon, that charitable man who passed his whole life in doing good, bring to notice every year some of these modest virtues. Last year's prize was allotted to the sublime devotedness of an old servant.

Let me, my children, relate to you this story, so closely connected with the present subject. In the small village of Champ-rond, in the department of Eure, there lived with his family a joiner called Martin. Whilst he was at work one day, the door opened : a young man came in, followed by three very little children ; the youngest was barely two years old.

Martin recognized in this stranger the son of his former benefactor, the Marguis de l'Aubépine, to whose kindness he owed his education, whom at a later period he had followed to the wars, and whom in fact he had served during many years. At that time the de l'Aubépine family was very wealthy, owned extensive landed property, and lived in the ancient castle de Villebon, which they had inherited from one of their ancestors, the great Sully.

Soon this splendid fortune was lost ; the old castle, full of the most glorious memories, fell into the hands of strangers, and in 1830, the time of which I speak, the last descendant of the family, the Count de l'Aubépine, obliged to leave France on account of continued losses of fortune, confided his children to the faithful care of an old servant.

Martin, a poor workman, who himself had several children, joyfully received those that Providence sent him. M. de l'Aubépine went away ; he went never to return. Some months after, it was known that he had died in exile

What will become of the poor orphans? Martin does not

forsake them in their misfortune; he works with redoubled energy; he sells his furniture, when all his other resources fail; he feeds his own children on black bread, in order to give his adopted sons the white bread to which they had always been accustomed; and who would believe it, my children?—though he had become, one may say, the father of these poor little beings, Martin does not even consider himself their equal: never was he seen to sit down at the same table as they; and in his humble cottage he desired to remain their servant, as he once had been the servant of their grandfather in the fine castle of Sully.

This pious devotedness, my friends, could not long remain unknown; soon it was talked about in all the country; the children, taken notice of by charitable persons, were placed at schools; and Martin, publicly crowned for his noble conduct, received the most honorable of all rewards, and yet a reward much beneath the one God keeps in store for him, the one he had already found in his own heart.

THIRTY-THIRD LESSON.

On Almsgiving.

“He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord.”—PROV. xix. 17.

When there is a weak or infirm child in a family, he becomes the object of special kindness, of more attentive care: it is he whom his parents prefer to all the others; his brothers and sisters are constantly engaged in pleasing him and in amusing him, because they wish, if it be possible, to compensate him for the privations he suffers, and to make him forget by dint of great love his sad position. Well, my dear young friends, the poor are like these unfortunate children amidst God's large family; he cherishes them most particularly on account of their

sufferings, and has given us the task—we who have been loaded with the bounties of Providence—to become in our turn the providence of the unfortunate. On this condition only, God gave us wealth ; and to fulfill our duties towards the poor it is sufficient to have a good heart. But can you quite understand what is poverty, you, my children, who live in wealth, or at least in affluence ; you who want for nothing, you who are well clothed, well fed, surrounded by all sorts of care, and who have but to express a wish and to see it directly fulfilled by your parents ? As you see around you persons placed in a similar position to yours, you think no doubt that this situation is here below the lot of the greater number. It is not so, nevertheless : a large portion of our brethren are plunged in dreadful distress, and the world is filled with poverty. Those that are the most to be pitied amongst them are not the working classes, who support their families only by the most assiduous and painful work ; there are some poor who die of hunger, of cold, of misery, because old age or infirmities take away from them all means of subsistence, or because, being ill, they cannot procure the help which would perhaps save their life. When you think of this, my children, does it not make you quite sad, and above all quite ashamed, to employ in useless expenses so much money, and to pay for some trifle, of which you often tire in one day, a price on which a whole family might live for a long time ? And then again, only think that these wretched creatures are men like ourselves, our brethren, God's children—that we might have been born in their place if God had so ordained it—then, my children, far from despising the poor, as some heartless people do, or avoiding them because the sight of their poverty is repugnant, you will wish to soothe these unfortunate beings by the most tender charity, and at least to pity the sufferings you cannot alleviate.

It is not only to gratify our own feelings that we are to be charitable. God has given us the most precise commands on almsgiving : he threatens with his wrath those who are avaricious, and those whose hearts are hardened by their wealth, whilst at the same time he promises his most abundant blessings and the

full happiness of heaven to all who are willing to help the poor. Thus it would be almost right to say : Jesus Christ has made charity the condition of our salvation.

To conclude, let me remind you that our Lord made himself poor, and, as if to incline us still more forcibly to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, he assures us that the least act of kindness done to the least among them, is looked upon by him as if done to himself. Oh ! my children, bear this always in mind when you meet any poor person ; remember that it is Jesus Christ himself who asks of you, he himself who stretches out his hand towards you : can you refuse anything to that God who gave you all, even his own life ?

But perhaps you will say, how can we give alms at our age ? We have so little money at our disposal ! To this I can reply that it is not the value of the gift but the good will with which it is accompanied that is agreeable to God. One child can share his pocket money with the poor ; another can deprive himself of some passing fancy to give the value of it to a beggar : in such cases both would have been really charitable ; the child who having only the piece of bread prepared for his luncheon, if he gives it to a poor child, has done a very kind action, and God will remember that he praised the modest gift of the widow spoken of in the holy Gospel, and that he promised never to leave unrewarded even a glass of water given in his name. It may happen besides, that very little may give great pleasure and do real good. With a few pence, a poor man may warm his chilled limbs, a poor mother buy bread for her child, a poor lad work all day with a contented heart. And then when you love the poor, you find a thousand ways of helping them ; for charity is ingenious ; and without money you can still console misfortune, if it were only by a pitying look or a kind word.

Try to deserve the blessing of the poor, my children ; believe that it will bring down on you the blessing of God, and that it will give you happiness. Believe really, that charity makes the giver happier than the one who receives the kindness ; the joy of doing good is such that it can only be compared to the bliss of heaven.

THIRTY-FOURTH LESSON.

On Conscience.

"For there is no other thing of more worth to thee than it."—ECCLES. xxxvii. 17.

What is called conscience, my dear children, is that which enables us to discern good from evil; the natural law God has engraven in our hearts, the light which makes our way clear, the voice which speaks from the depth of our souls; you must listen to it, you must follow its dictates; and thus you will keep the Lord's commandments; by this means alone can you feel peace and be happy. My children, in order to make you understand properly, what is conscience, I have only to appeal to yourselves, to your own experience. When it happens that you disobey your parents, that for instance you commit, during their absence, an act you would not have dared to commit before them, you hesitate, you tremble, you blush. Why are you so agitated? You are alone; no one sees you; you are not afraid of being punished: no, but the still voice of conscience reproaches you with your sin; this voice says to you: "You are doing wrong." It is conscience, my dear children, which makes itself heard at that moment. It is that same voice which, even before you have taken time to reflect, shows each of you his duty.

So then God has put at our disposal, a sure and easy means of behaving well, since this divine law is, so to say, written in our very heart's core.

This faculty of which I speak, is given to all, to the ignorant, as well as to the learned, to very little children, as well as to grown people.

But we must listen to conscience if we wish to be guided by it; it does not speak loud; you can hear it only by showing good will and sincerity towards yourself. If you try to deceive yourself, to persuade yourself that what is forbidden is allowed; if you want to find a thousand pretences to satisfy a whim contrary to your conscience, you will not be able to excuse yourself

by saying you were not warned, nor could you pretend not to know you were doing wrong. It is always a sin, my friends, not to follow the dictates of conscience ; but if, on the contrary, you obey them, you are sure never to fail in any important duty, never to commit any serious fault.

The trouble caused by a bad conscience, the remorse which ensues, is, even in this world, a cruel punishment for our faults: the guilty soul, my children, no longer enjoys either peace or happiness. How many striking examples of this do we not meet with in holy Scripture ! Cain, his brother's murderer, leads a wandering and a miserable life ; fugitive and banished, he looks for rest everywhere but finds none. Judas, as soon as he had become traitor to his divine Master, is persecuted by awful remorse ; the money he has earned so shamefully is too heavy a load, he cannot look at it, he throws it away ; then, in despair, he kills himself.

Let me ask you, dear children, if when your conscience reproaches you with some fault, you are as happy as when you feel guiltless ; do you not, even in the midst of enjoyment, feel a kind of sadness that takes away all pleasure and throws a gloom over all your mirth ?

A good conscience, on the contrary, makes one happy and contented. It doubles our pleasures ; and consoles us even in disappointment. It alleviates our sufferings, and in fact gives us peace, peace with God, peace with our brethren, with ourselves: this, my children, is the true Christian's great happiness, in this world.

To deserve such happiness, my dear children, let these words of the holy Scripture sink deeply into your hearts: "In every action listen to the voice of thy conscience thou wilt never meet with a more faithful adviser."

The voice of the inward monitor, conscience, is always present to guide us aright. To your own strength, if you were left to yourselves alone, it would, of course, be very difficult, and even impossible, to walk in perfection, because we can do nothing without God's assistance. But God's help, following the guidance of your conscience, will render the work sweet and easy.

THIRTY-FIFTH LESSON.

On Sin.

“Take heed thou never consent to sin, nor trespass the commandments of the Lord our God.”—TOBIAS iv. 6.

To sin is to disobey God, either by committing the evil he forbids, or by not doing the good he commands : it is, in a word, not following his law.

To follow God's law, my children, you must study it well, and this duty necessitates a full knowledge of your religion ; you must therefore read the holy Gospel, and listen attentively and with docility to those who are willing to try and make you understand it. Your ignorance, supposing it were voluntary, would not serve you as an excuse for failing in your duty and committing sin.

There are, as you know, two sorts of sin : original sin and actual sin. Original sin is the one we are guilty of in coming into the world, the penalty inflicted on us through the disobedience of our first parents. This fault is transmitted to their children, to their children's children, and thence to all men ; we are thus born guilty and the enemies of God, subjected, like Adam, to the miseries, sufferings of the body, to the bad impulses of the will and heart. It is this original sin which is the sad source of all our miseries as well as of all our faults.

To be guilty of a sin, which we have not committed, and of which we suffer the penalty, must astonish you, my children : this terrible destiny most certainly contains a hidden mystery. It is nevertheless one of those truths of faith which we cannot contest. It is, besides, quite impossible that God should act unjustly towards his creatures : this would be still more difficult to believe than even to believe in original sin. And then God did not forsake man in this fearful extremity : the sacrament of baptism purifies our souls from the original stain, and to struggle with its sad results, divine grace will ever be granted us.

Actual sin is what we commit by our own free will, after we have reached the age of reason, and when we know how to discern good from evil. Actual sin may be committed in four different ways : in thought, word, action, or omission.

To sin in thought, is to revolt in spirit against the law of God, or the commands of our superiors : it is to wish to do wrong, to have feelings of pride, of envy, etc. All these bad thoughts, and others besides, my children, may nevertheless not be sins ; they only become so when we allow them voluntarily to take possession of us ; but if they only pass through our minds rapidly, against our will, we do not offend God ; and if, when they enter our minds, we firmly repel them, they may become a source of merit in the eyes of the Lord, on account of the victory that we have obtained over these temptations. You must not then, you see, mistake sin for temptation : the latter is prompted by Satan, God allows it to try us ; we cannot escape from it ; but sin is a voluntary act, and it is in our power not to commit it.

To sin in word is to lie, to swear, to speak evil of your neighbor, to insult him, to answer your parents impertinently, or without respect.

To sin in action is to commit a forbidden action, to take what is not our own, to be given to greediness, to strike our companions, etc. To sin from omission is to neglect our duties, not to say our prayers, or to say them inattentively, to have no heart in our daily tasks, not to give as much as we can in charity.

Our duties, as you must perceive, my children, not being all of similar importance : our sins are also of more or less consequence : in the first place, according as the duty in which we have failed was more or less important, and then according as the guilty will which leads to disobey the Lord was more or less strong in our mind. It is often almost against his will that a poor child is led into evil : he only half consents to it ; perhaps a young friend has been guilty of influencing him : who can tell ? Perhaps he resisted long before falling into sin. He would then be more excusable, certainly, than if he had committed a fault with premeditation, firmly intending to do wrong.

Mortal sins are so called when the faults are of very great importance in themselves, and if they are committed quite voluntarily. These faults ought to inspire us with the deepest horror. They would kill our soul by depriving it of God's grace, which is its true life; and mortal sin, when not expiated here below by penance, will be punished hereafter by eternal chastisements.

The faults which are of less importance are called venial sins. These sins do not take away grace, but they weaken it in us. It would be very wrong, my children, for us not to try to shun what we call small faults; they lead us by degrees to faults of greater consequence.

It is true that you do not become exceedingly guilty all at once; it is insensibly, by degrees, and as the holy Scripture says: those who despise minor faults, will little by little commit greater ones.

Would it not also be showing little gratitude towards God, to keep no watch over what displeases him even slightly? What would you say, for instance, of a child who, without wishing really to grieve his father, would not cease to cause him every day a thousand small vexations?

And you cannot doubt that sin displeases God extremely, and that it is the greatest insult we can offer him. We can never even understand to what a degree God hates evil; but what ought in some way to give us an idea of this, my children, is that it required nothing less than the death of our Saviour to expiate sin; and that, to punish it, God notwithstanding his goodness, prepares eternal chastisement! My dear children, avoid sin and all occasions that may lead you to commit it. Correct those faults which so often expose you to offend God. Offend God! There is no greater misfortune in this world.

Queen Blanche, the pious mother of St. Louis, was so convinced of this truth, that notwithstanding her maternal tenderness, she often told her son, that she should prefer seeing him dead than guilty of a mortal sin. This holy king remembered faithfully his mother's pious instructions, and transmitted them himself to his own son. As he felt his end approaching, say the

chronicles of the time, in their quaint language, he sent for his son : " Very sweet son," did he say, " the first thing that I teach you, is that you set your heart to love God, because without this, no one can be saved : take care not to do anything which would displease God, and be you ever ready to suffer all sorts of dreadful torments rather than commit one mortal sin."

THIRTY-SIXTH LESSON.

On Pride.

" Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—ST. LUKE XIV. 11.

Pride is an excessive love of oneself and of one's own merit, the effect of which is to prefer oneself to others, to make everything tend to self and not to God. The sin of the rebellious angels, my children, was a sin of pride ; and pride also was the cause of our first father's fall. There is no defeat more general than this : it penetrates into the heart ; as soon as we cease to watch over ourselves, it mingles with our actions, by taking away from us the merit of the little good we have done. Pride is hateful in the eyes of God, as the holy Scripture gives us a thousand proofs ; and if we want to form an idea of the chastisement reserved to this vicious disposition, let us remember, my children, the punishment of the angels of heaven, and the sad results of the sin of Adam and Eve.

Pride is the source of a very great number of vices, the principal of which are, at least for children of your age : vanity, ostentation, presumption, and the contempt of your neighbor.

Vanity, my dear children, is that vain glory we derive from our personal advantages : it is the wish to be praised, admired. Ah ! what can we have a right to glory in ? we are such mere nothings on the face of the earth ; besides, what do we possess that does not come from God ? What have we done, for instance, to obtain all we are so ready to be proud of : our beauty, the gifts of our mind, our birth, our wealth ?

A little girl is pretty, or at least she thinks herself so ; she is often to be found admiring herself before a looking-glass ; she loses a considerable time dressing, and every day she continually teases her mother to buy ornaments which are useless, or only fit for those who are older : this is vanity.

There is quite as much vanity, my children, in being vexed at not possessing certain advantages, as in glorifying ourselves on those we actually possess. Another little girl, sad at not being so beautiful and so much admired as her companions, is quite as vain as she who is proud of her beauty.

And that child who argues on everything and with everybody, who is always discussing, who pretends to have opinions, who obstinately refuses to give in to his elders : here, again, vanity makes him ridiculous.

The second defeat of pride is ostentation. It consists in displaying one's advantages, in attracting the attention of others to them, in order to receive praise. It is often out of ostentation that we do good, almsgiving for instance. But let us take care : for if the world knows our good actions, and gives us praise for them, we then shall have received our reward here below, and we shall not receive it in heaven. Our almsgiving must remain secret between God and the poor. We must ourselves try to forget it, so as to oblige God to remember it ; and according to the Gospel advice : what is done by the right hand, should not be known by the left.

Would you believe, my children, that there are persons who glory in the evil they do, even in that which they have not done, and of which most assuredly they are incapable ? Well, silliness can reach that point ; and I know some children who, towards their companions, glory in being independent, undutiful, very clever at fooling their parents and their masters.

To conclude, then, when pride governs the heart, it often leads us to pretend we may despise others. A child said to God in his prayer, like the Pharisee in the Gospel : " O Lord, I thank thee that I have not, like my companions, such and such a defect." Poor child ! remember these words of Jesus Christ : "*Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled,*" and fear

lest he should address them to you ; fear lest, by his humility, this child who to you seems so imperfect, should be more agreeable to God than you are yourself.

And what must we think of another child who, because his parents are wealthy, looks down disdainfully upon children less fortunate than he, who passing proudly those whose attire is less grand than his own, makes them feel the difference which exists between himself and them ? You could suppose that child to have no heart : let us hope he has only a silly pride, of which, after due reflection, he will correct himself.

May those amongst you, my children, who have recognized themselves in the examples which I have just made, hasten to own it frankly ; it will be taking a first step to acquire that virtue of humility, of which our Lord and his holy Mother have given us the example, which was so dear to them. Let us own it, my children, the little good we have in us, God put there himself ; evil only comes of our own making.

Where then can we place our vanity ? Let us pray God to cure us ; let us pray him to teach us to value things only for what they are worth in his eyes, to love only what he loves ; what remains does not deserve the devotion of our hearts. With these feelings we shall be without pride for the very small advantages we possess, and quite resigned to the loss of those of which we are deprived. Let us make our happiness consist in obtaining the approbation of the Lord, of our family, and of our conscience. Let us not look for the vain praise of the world, and God, my children, will certainly bless us who have tried to become, according to his example, kind and humble of heart.

THIRTY-SEVENTH LESSON.

The Assumption.

“Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.”—ISA. lxiñ. 3.

My dear children, on this day the Church celebrates the most holy death of the Blessed Virgin and her glorious Assumption

into heaven. Mary, rejoining her divine son, receives from him a crown of immortality, a life of happiness and of glory, which she so justly deserved by her virtues, her sufferings, the retired and humble life she had led on earth. To-day Mary becomes Queen of Heaven, and our powerful patroness: but we must not forget, my children, that Mary had been long before our model. Let us then set ourselves to study the holy examples she has given us; let us try to remember the principal points of her life, and exert ourselves to imitate her virtues: that will be the best way of honouring our mother on the day of her feast. My dear children, according to the belief of the Church, which belief every true servant of Mary considered it an honor to share, even before the Church had proclaimed it an article of faith, the Blessed Virgin was exempted from the stain of original sin. No doubt God could not allow the soul of the chosen creature, who was to become his mother, to be a single instant defiled by sin.

God himself foretold Mary to our first parents, and she was also spoken of long beforehand by a prophet, who foretold that she was chosen to give birth to the Son of God. Mary was born at Nazareth, a small town in Galilee. Ann and Joachim her mother and father, descended from the tribe of Juda, and were of the family of David. Notwithstanding this ancient and royal descent, they were poor, and led a life of retirement. Their virtues, however, became sufficiently known for the Church to place them amongst the saints whose feasts are celebrated every year.

To show their gratitude to God, whose goodness had bestowed on them their only child, Mary's pious parents wished to consecrate her to the Lord, and therefore, at four years old, she was brought to the Temple of Jerusalem, to be there educated with other little girls. Mary, whose judgment was beyond her years, and whose heart was already overflowing with divine love, promised to give herself entirely to God, and vowed to renounce all earthly wealth. One is happy to picture to oneself, this amiable and holy child; either kneeling on the steps of the Temple, praying with angelical fervor, or else showing herself meek, dutiful towards the guardians of her childhood, gentle and kind

to her young companions, and in short, in the purest and holiest childhood that ever existed, giving a most affecting and perfect example of Christian childhood.

Mary remained in the Temple, till she was married to a holy man named Joseph, he as well as she, descended from the royal lineage of David; but he too was poor: he followed the trade of carpenter.

Whilst the Virgin Mary lived in Nazareth with Joseph, God ordered the Archangel Gabriel to announce to her that she would be the mother of the Saviour promised to the world. "Behold the hand-maid of the Lord: be it done unto me according to thy word," said Mary humbly, thinking more of her wish to do the will of God, than of the glory with which she was about to be invested, in becoming the Mother of our Saviour.

My children, according to the Angel's words, and during a journey Joseph and Mary had undertaken, in obedience to the decree of the Roman Emperor, our Lord Jesus Christ was born in the poor stable of Bethlehem.

There began the maternal anguish of the Blessed Virgin. Her divine Son's cradle was a humble crib; his only covering, coarse swaddling clothes. No sooner had Mary's heart rejoiced on seeing the eagerness with which the shepherds and Wise Men came to adore the divine infant, than she is constrained to fly to Egypt, to escape from Herod's fury. In order to obey a law, from which Mary might have considered herself as exempted, she had already been to the Temple to present her son to the Lord, and, like all the poor women in Israel, she had offered up for his ransom, a pair of turtle doves. Then the holy and aged Simeon, taking the Infant Jesus in his arms, prophesied to Mary all she would have one day to suffer through this dear child, and announced to her that her heart would be pierced with sorrow as by a sword. How often, my friends, during the thirty years Jesus lived with his mother, must not that poor mother have been reminded of this prediction of the holy aged man, and have trembled at the thought of its accomplishment.

The time appointed by our Lord for his divine mission draws near, and he leaves Nazareth to begin his holy preaching. The

Gospel says nothing of the Blessed Virgin, except to mention her presence at the marriage feast of Cana, to let us know it was at her entreaty that Jesus performed there his first miracle. If Mary vouchsafe thus to take an interest in the slightest wants of those who surrounded her, it is beyond doubt, my children, that in accompanying our Lord on his journeys, she must have implored him in favor of those with whom she lived, and so must have become to a certain degree their providence. This soothing thought should encourage us always to invoke Mary with entire faith and confidence.

We do not know if the Blessed Virgin was present at all the painful scenes of Jesus Christ's Passion; but we see her on Calvary standing at the foot of the cross. There it is that her heart is torn with grief as by a dagger; there it is, also, that, treasuring up our Saviour's last words at the moment of his death, Mary consents to become our mother. Poor mother, how deeply must she not have loved us, to have forgiven us the death of her well-beloved Son!

My children, Mary lived on for several years; she even reached old age. Shut up in the upper chamber with the Apostles after Our Lord's Ascension, like them she received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost; she witnessed the foundation of the holy Christian Church; and then at last, God put an end to her exile and called her to him: her heart and mind were already in heaven. She died deeply regretted by the Apostles. She left them, to be for ever united with Jesus Christ, whose departure had cost her such bitter tears.

It is the belief of the Church that the Blessed Virgin, immediately after her death entered heaven in body and soul; this firm belief, my children, has given rise to this day's solemnity. The Church, after having during the course of the year celebrated successively all the most important events of the Blessed Virgin's life, her Birth, her Presentation in the Temple, her Purification, her Visitation to St. Elizabeth, her anguish on Calvary, now celebrates her triumph and her glorification. May this feast be precious to you, my friends; above all, may it leave on your minds a good and lasting impression. Honor Mary by fervent

prayers, love her, throw yourself into her maternal arms; confide to her your childhood, your youth, your whole life, confide to her your good resolutions, that they may be strengthened, your evil propensities, that they may be destroyed. Ask her to direct you, to guide you, and to teach you how to imitate her. Remember, dear children, that Mary was the most submissive, the most humble, the most modest of all creatures; that she never glorified herself in any manner and never sought admiration from any one. Prayer, work, silence, and, above all, the love of God, occupied her whole life. What an example for us!

THIRTY-EIGHTH LESSON.

On Envy.

“Neither will I go with consuming envy; for such a man shall not be a partaker of wisdom.”—WISDOM vi. 25.

Envy is a feeling of sadness, caused by the advantages or the happiness of our equals. Oh, my children, what a mean fault! how shameful and despicable! Do you not consider it particularly as the sign of a very bad heart? Ought we not naturally to rejoice in the happiness of others? Even that has but little merit in it; a kind heart only is shown by it.

Envy, my children, is also a proof of great vanity. It is the longing after praise, the desire to be admired, which is often the greatest cause of the envy we feel towards others. Did we but envy good qualities and virtues! If that little girl, so jealous of her companion, only wished to be like her in her amiable disposition, in her attention to study, it would be more excusable; and might even end in creating useful emulation. But what the little jealous girl envies are ordinarily frivolous and petty things; a pretty face, even less, a fine dress, a ribbon—and I do not know what else?

Generally speaking, envy has its source in pride, and in its turn leads to very dreadful consequences. Envy makes you egotistical, unjust, often wicked, and always unhappy.

It leads to selfishness, for an envious person wishes to have everything to himself, so as to leave nothing to others. Envy makes us unjust, for we are disposed to judge severely those of whom we are jealous. I greatly fear the little girl of whom we were speaking just now may not do justice to her companion, when this latter does something well. But it is not her fault, my child, if she be better than you, and if her temper be sweeter and more amiable than yours. Such advantages should not excite envy.

Envy may make you quite wicked. When you are vexed that others are happy, you are very near rejoicing at any misfortune that may happen to them. Nothing can be more wicked than that, nothing is more against the Christian charity God orders us to feel for one another, the effect of which is to make us sympathize with the misfortune as well as with the happiness of our brethren.

It is impossible to think without trembling, my children, of the awful crimes which are often the consequences of jealousy. It caused the death of Abel, it was jealousy that led Joseph's brothers to sell him as a slave, and the Pharisees to condemn our Lord. By remembering these terrible examples, you may easily understand, my children, what the Apostle St. Paul said in one of his epistles, "The envious man will not obtain the kingdom of heaven."

Never, then, let this evil passion take root in your heart. If you see it beginning to penetrate there, if you perceive any proofs of it in yourself, hasten to destroy them. Envy would not only make you guilty, but most certainly would also make you miserable. First, you would be unhappy, because you would be displeased with yourself; then, besides, to envy the good things you have not, disgusts you even with those you possess; unhappy also, because no one would share your sorrow. It is so shameful to be jealous, that you would not dare own it to any one; and it is double suffering, my children, not to be able to ask your friends to pity you, or God to console you.

A sort of jealousy, more excusable without doubt than the

first, but the consequences of which unfortunately are no less terrible, is that which is to be met with sometimes between brothers and sisters, in regard to the affection of their parents. This jealousy disturbs a whole family: it destroys the bond of union between the children, and saddens the father and mother, who notwithstanding their wish and the care they take, never succeed in dividing all things with such perfect equality, that the jealous child may not suspect some injustice. It often is an over-sensitiveness which makes a child fear he is less beloved in the family. If I knew this poor child, I would call him to me, and I would say to him: "My dear, it is almost sure that the injustice of which you complain exists only in your imagination." The most natural sentiment to all parents, is to love all their children with an equal affection. Parents' tenderness may not always show itself in the same way, and notwithstanding be the same in the depth of their heart; thus, a mother will often give up the greatest part of the day to her eldest son, because it is required on account of the importance of his education: but in the meantime, perhaps she will oftener caress the youngest, because caresses alone are the proper language understood by quite little children, the only way to make them understand their mother's affection.

Now, if there be in a family a weak or invalid child, is it not right that every one should be more engaged with him than with all the others, and that he should become, so to speak, his parents' pet child? His brothers and sisters, far from complaining, ought to take their share of the care bestowed on him. It seems also natural to me, to caress little girls more than little boys: not because boys are less beloved, but girls are weaker, and at an early age you already begin to treat boys as men.

Let us nevertheless, my dear child, suppose that the little difference which grieves you, really exists: is it not your fault? If you are less loved, is it not because you are much less amiable, less prompt to obey your parents, less ready to do everything to please them? In this case, you have really no right to complain, and rather than give way to your grief, you ought to think of correcting yourself. You would then learn very quickly how to regain the affection of your family.

THIRTY=NINTH LESSON.

On Lying.

"Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor."—ST. PAUL, Ephes. iv. 25.

God hates lying, my children, because it is the work of his enemy the devil, who introduced here below the first act of falsehood, so as to destroy the peace of our first parents. Holy Scripture, for this reason, gives the malignant spirit the name of the father of lies : and God, who particularly loves the virtue which is in opposition to this vice, calls himself the God of truth. Must you hear more to be inspired with the horror of untruth !

Let us then try to understand perfectly in what consists the guilt of falsehood. To lie, is to say voluntarily the contrary of truth ; it is to lead one's neighbor into error, and make a wrong use of the gift of speech God has deigned to grant us ; speech, in truth, was given to us to express our thoughts, and not, my dear children, to dissemble them.

There exists several kind of lies ; each of which, it is true, is not equally blamable, but there is not a single one which is allowed. There is not a lie, let it be as insignificant as possible, which we ought not to reproach ourselves with. Thus many people lie in joking. According to them, it is a kind of amusement, and they excuse themselves of their falsehoods by saying that they are of no importance, and that besides they harm no one. That may be ; nevertheless the habit of telling things differently to what they are in reality, is a most reprehensible one ; it leads generally to falsehoods of deeper importance.

You begin by relating, with all kinds of embellishments, some insignificant tale ; and then, not content with this, at a later period you talk of your neighbor's faults with the same disregard to truth.

Children very easily give way to falsehood, by telling an untruth in order to avoid the discovery of a fault, and to shield themselves from the punishment they have thereby deserved. By so doing they add one sin to another, and become doubly

guilty in the eyes of God and of their parents : if the latter discover the hidden fault, the child who has lied deserves then to be doubly punished, while, on the other hand, the child who has been truthful, will have forced maternal severity to relent. How can it be possible to scold the guilty child when he himself has owned all ? Believe me, my dear children, sincerity is preferable to all false excuses ; and it is fully as much your interest as your duty to be sincere.

The most hateful of all falsehoods is calumny ; that is to say, the false accusation of your neighbor. Such wickedness makes you feel indignant, my children. I cannot, for a single instant, suppose that you would be apt to commit it. No doubt you would blush at the bare idea of calumniating any one from mere wickedness, and with the full intent of injuring him ; but if you do not get the better of the reluctancy you feel to own your wrong doings ; if you allow yourself a first falsehood to excuse them ; perhaps you will be drawn on to calumniate, and end in accusing your brother or a servant of a fault that you have committed yourself. It would already be very wrong to let your parents suspect others, and their suspicions would be unavoidable if by the help of a lie you succeeded in proving that you are not the guilty one.

You can lie in deed, as well as in word, by trying to appear better than you really are. This kind of falsehood, which springs from pride, is called hypocrisy. At church a child's demeanor is most pious. His hands are clasped together, he seems to be most deeply engrossed in prayer ; seeing him so, you would say he is a little angel ; but he is a hypocrite. He has only the outward appearance of piety, for he is thinking of all sorts of things excepting prayer. That scholar, instead of doing his tasks, is amusing himself, but in order to deceive his teacher, he seems in his presence to study very attentively : this also is an act of hypocrisy.

And now, my children, tell me what you have won by such behavior ? compliments, praise ? but these compliments, this praise, are not deserved. What pleasure can you derive therefrom ? Are they not rather a kind of reproach ?

My dear children, do you wish never to be tempted to lie? Never have anything to hide; never do wrong. The Lord's eyes are always upon you; even when no one on this earth sees you, God sees you and judges you; no mortal being can deceive him: of what use would it be to you then to deceive your fellow-men?

Besides, my dear children, sooner or later God allows the truth to be made known, and liars betray themselves. They are then full of confusion, and receive, even in this world, the punishment they deserve. The man who is deceitful and untrue is despised; all his words are distrusted; he is never believed, even when he speaks the truth: no one would consider him as a friend.

FORTIETH LESSON.

On Slander.

"Detract not one another, my brethren."—ST. JAMES iv. 11

The Apostle St. James advised the Christians of his time to put a check on their tongues, so as to avoid all sin by word of mouth. I have already tried, my dear children, to inspire you with a great horror of the most dreadful of these sins: falsehood, and calumny; there are many others fully as hateful in the sight of the Lord, which are slander, mocking words, or indiscreet and useless ones.

You know in what slander consists. Is there a single one of us, my children, who has nothing to reproach himself with on this head? Who considers himself as bound to strict secrecy as far as regards the faults of his neighbor? No doubt slander is less odious than calumny; but the evil that results from both is the same. Besides, it cannot be atoned for. When you have had the misfortune to accuse an innocent person, you can do

that person justice by owning you have told a falsehood, by declaring that you have made a mistake, but when the accusations are well founded, atonement is impossible, for the mischief is done.

You cannot as yet understand, my children, what may be the terrible consequences of slander ; you do not see any great harm in saying of your companions that they are liars or that they are disobedient. At your age, it is true, slander cannot bear a serious aspect ; but let me ask you, my dear friends, would you be pleased if your playfellows, at the risk of having you scolded, were to tell anything you do ? Certainly not. Have you then forgotten the precept of Christian charity that tells us : " Do not unto others what you would not that they should do unto you ? "

Keep then secret the wrong deeds of your young friends, unless it be necessary to make them known.

If, for instance, a child's disobedience brought him into danger, it would then be your duty to warn his parents. If one of your playfellows were not the good and well-behaved child he was thought to be, when recommended to you as a friend ; if he set you bad example and gave you bad advice, you would do well to inform your mother, so that she might take you away from this dangerous company. In these two circumstances, my children, conscience will enable you to discern the motive which obliges you to speak. A good and charitable child will be very unhappy and sad when obliged to accuse a playfellow, while, on the contrary, a child given to slander, feels a sort of wicked pleasure in giving way to this sin.

Slander would not be so common, my children, if we judged others less hastily and with more indulgence. You very easily suppose that this little girl has such and such a fault : are you quite sure of this ? Often you only repeat the slanderings of others, you condemn on mere suspicion : when about to bring an accusation against any one, the first thing to be done, is to make sure there is no likelihood of a mistake.

And even when you have every certainty, my children, when you no longer entertain any doubt as to the guilt of your friends,

is there then no way to excuse them, or at least do you not need to pity them? Perhaps these poor children were badly taught? Perhaps no one thought of reprimanding or correcting them? Besides, they were born perhaps with less inclinations towards good than you; this is not their fault, and imperfect as they still are, who knows, if they have not already quite corrected themselves, if they have not made more efforts to master their temper than you, who accuse them, have made to master yours? Reflect on yourselves, my children, and the remembrance of your own faults will make you more indulgent for those of your neighbors.

I also advise you, not to allow yourself to give way to a certain love of fun, by which you turn everybody into ridicule, and mischievously pick out all that may be laughed at in others. Such a character generally makes itself hateful; it bespeaks a frivolous mind, and what is worse still, an unkind heart. And in reality, what do you see to laugh at, particularly at your age? A strange face, a language to which you are not accustomed, and must I add, very often, alas! some sad infirmity, which is the cause of great distress to the unfortunate being thus afflicted, and which, however, is but ridiculous in your eyes! I know your intention is not a bad one, you only want to joke and to laugh: but think how a joke may wound and hurt; think how wicked it would be to laugh at what causes grief to another.

A few moments' reflection, a certain reserve, the habit of silence, of that silence which becomes the young so well, would keep you from many faults. It is generally your wish to talk at random, without any reasonable motive and for the mere sake of talking, that turns you into slanderers and backbiters, makes you indiscreet, guilty before God, troublesome and harassing to those who are with you. Holy Scripture teaches us that the multitude of words is not without sin, for it is difficult to speak much without offending God or our neighbor; that is why, very likely, we are one day to account for our useless words. Be careful then to avoid them, and pray God, my children, that he may help you never to make either a foolish or a wicked use of the gifts you have received from his bounty.

FORTY-FIRST LESSON.

On Curiosity.

"In unnecessary matters be not over curious."—ECCLUS. iii. 24.

Curiosity is the desire to know, to learn what you do not know ; it is a most happy disposition, and quite praiseworthy when it leads to the knowledge of useful things, so as to adorn one's memory with interesting facts. Such curiosity, my children, can never be too much encouraged. It gives ardor to study ; and assists us in overcoming courageously the difficulties thereof : it would be quite advantageous, particularly to you, who have so much to learn, and who often find study so tedious. There is, I know, a degree of curiosity perfectly natural at your age, but unfortunately it is not the one we are speaking of just now. The latter is a curiosity that can bring forth no good, because it is indiscreet and frivolous, because it leads you to disobey your parents, and can become harmful.

What I call frivolous curiosity is a longing to know things which have no interest either for others or for yourselves. All this insignificant news, that frivolity, those nothings, that you have so anxiously desired to know, have not made the slightest impression on you ; you forget them directly after, and you have derived from them no other pleasure than the satisfying your curiosity for a second. This vain and frivolous disposition has the great disadvantage of accustoming your mind to a levity which will, at some later period, prevent your being interested in what is truly useful.

Curiosity often involves still greater inconvenience, both to yourselves and to your neighbor. Nearly always the curious child fails to be discreet ; he wants to know the secrets of others, and really that is hardly less blamable than to reveal them. He becomes unbearable to all by his continual and repeated questions ; he wants to be informed of your actions, of the most insignificant words, even of your intentions : it seems that you ought to give him an account of everything. If grown people speak

in a whisper, the child, who seems busy at play, has listened to all, has heard all. If he is ordered out of the room, so that his elders may be able to speak more freely, led on by curiosity, he will remain near the door. If by chance a letter, or some written papers, are left on the table, the curious child hastens to catch hold of them to read them. Really I blush for the poor child, who, mastered by his bad inclinations, does not himself blush while committing such a shameful action. I told you, my dear children, that curiosity often leads to disobedience, and in this case it may become fatal. Children have been known to have poisoned themselves, and to have died after most cruel sufferings, from having tasted the contents of a phial, though it had been most carefully put aside. Other unfortunate children have killed themselves with fire-arms, which they had had the curiosity to handle, though they had been most strictly forbidden to do so.

I must not allow you to remain ignorant of the sad influence such a fault may exercise over the mind and heart. A child asks his mother a question, which she does not think fit to answer: he will repeat the same question to every one, until at last he meets with a person weak enough to consent to satisfy his indiscreet curiosity. This person, probably less able than his mother to answer the child in a true and proper manner, will give him incomplete explanations, from which the child will gather false or bad notions, which if without great importance as to the present, will not fail most surely to involve serious consequences in the future. The same may be said of those books you are forbidden to read, and which, when alone, you have perhaps been tempted to open. This would be a still more blamable disobedience, of which the effects are none the less to be feared.

To lessen your inclination to curiosity, I should like to try, my children, to preserve you from an error unfortunately too common at your age: you believe that the things it is thought not worth while to tell you, are more curious than others; and you suppose that the books you are forbidden to read are more interesting than all the others; on the contrary, it is to be pre-

sumed that you would not understand them, and that they can neither amuse nor instruct you.

I want to remind you here of some words of the holy book I so love to quote. One day, it was the eve of his death, our Lord, instructing his Apostles, spoke to them in this way: "I have still many things to tell you; but you could not bear them now." Is it not the same with you, my children? you are too young to know all, and not learned enough to understand everything. Wait: there are different degrees of knowledge as well as different pleasures for each age. Quite sufficient of what is beautiful, agreeable, and interesting is within your reach, and you need not envy your elders. It is for grown-up people to envy the blissful ignorance of your years of childhood, they who by sad experience know how many painful things are learnt as life advances!

FORTY-SECOND LESSON.

On Greediness.

"Sober drinking is health to soul and body."—ECCLES. xxxi. 37.

At your age, my dear children, you are so generally inclined to greediness, that you know but too well in what this sin consists; and I should have nothing to say on the subject, did I not consider it necessary to your welfare to have some short conversation with you about it. To be greedy is to drink or to eat unreasonably, excessively and eagerly. This bad propensity may lead to most fatal consequences; those who give way to it, are generally speaking in bad health; they often make themselves very ill, and while we are already to pity from the depths of our heart, those children who are suffering from illness or an accident sent by God himself, we feel it impossible to pity them who

suffer through their own fault. Animals who are not as we, endowed with reason and soul, give us, over and over again, good lessons on sobriety, and we should do well to follow their example. Greediness carried on to excess may lead to intemperance, a most vulgar and degrading vice, which deprives man of his reason, makes him a despicable object in the sight of his fellow-men, and lowers him beneath the beast : it is sufficient to be well brought up, to be preserved from such a shameful inclination.

But, my children, there is another kind of greediness, which is more usual among children than the first, and which, though it is more excusable, nevertheless is not without inconvenience. You have already guessed that I mean to speak of daintiness : that is to say, a liking for only certain choice morsels, and eating of them immoderately. No doubt there is no harm in preferring certain dishes to others, nor are we forbidden to derive pleasure from eating a thing that pleases our taste ; nor are we commanded to eat what we really dislike ; but God demands from us great sobriety, that is to say, we ought to be moderate at our meals, and take nourishment rather to strengthen ourselves than to satisfy our taste, and, to say the least, we ought never to injure our health by any excess.

If, from your childhood, you accustom yourselves to sobriety, at a later period, you will experience less difficulty in fulfilling those precepts of the holy Church, which at certain times of the year deprive us of some kinds of food to help us to atone for our sins.

Before bringing this chapter to a close, let me ask you, my dear children, to reflect with me on the following facts : there are in this world numbers of children, who, their lot being much less fortunate than yours, are in continual want of the daily necessities of life ; these poor little creatures, who have not even bread in abundance, would feast upon what you cast away from your meals as unworthy of your fastidious taste, and what you call a bad dinner would be a banquet for them. Think sometimes of this, my children, and for the future you will not be so difficult to please.

FORTY-THIRD LESSON.

On Anger.

"Be not quickly angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of a fool."—
ECCLUS. vii. 10.

Of all the evil propensities to which we are unfortunately subject, my dear children, none appears so early in life as the one on which I am going to speak to-day. Sometimes even infants are already a prey to anger; they show it by their screams and impatient gestures, and this passion is excited in them, as well as in grown people, by contradiction. Those little beings, whose intellect is as yet so slightly developed, who are quite devoid of reason, and who cannot speak to ask for what they wish, have no other means of making themselves understood than by weeping; and if their tears are not heeded, it is natural enough that they should become impatient and cross. But we, who have our judgment and the knowledge of God's law to guide us, how can we let ourselves be mastered by anger? How is it possible that the slightest obstacle which prevents us from doing what we like, or enjoying some pleasure, often disturbs us to such a degree that we talk and act as if we were quite insane.

And so saying, my children, I am not in the least guilty of exaggeration. A person in a violent passion is like one out of his mind, his features are distorted and his whole body quivers. This person is unconscious of all that is going on: such a state is real madness. What blasphemies against God! what injurious words against our neighbor! How many wicked deeds, how many odious crimes, does not this fatal passion produce every day.

Well, my dear children, do you fully understand the necessity of correcting in your early childhood any inclination you may have to anger? Later, this would become very difficult to you, every effort would be so painful. When we are very young, we are as yet masters of our evil inclinations; but if once we let

them be rooted in our hearts, they will soon master us. Fight then courageously against them ; master the slightest feeling of impatience as soon as you begin to experience it. Do not say, as too often happens to persons subject to anger : " I cannot help myself : it is in me." It would seem really, that when once we have given such an excuse, you are no longer obliged to correct yourself. You cannot help knowing, my dear friends, that such a pretence is a very vain one ; we all might, in fact, have recourse to it as an excuse for our faults ; and, on the contrary, it is precisely because we know our wicked propensities that we ought to act against them. Thus it was that St. Francis of Sales, naturally inclined to anger, became nevertheless the meekest of men, because he never ceased battling against his hasty temper.

You will no doubt ask me what are the best means to be employed to overcome all inclinations to anger. My children, the first of all is prayer. Let us never forget that without prayer we can do nothing : we must then ask our Lord Jesus Christ, who set us an example of such sincere meekness, for the grace to be able to master all hastiness which he reproves. Let us also be silent and reflect. When you feel inclined to be angry, nothing is better than silence, otherwise you are likely to say what you would deeply regret afterwards ; for instance, you might give your parents a rude answer, and when your anger is past, how sorry you would be for having committed such a fault !

Lastly, my children by reflecting seriously on our bad propensities we are also in a sure way to correct them. Tell me, what are the ordinary motives of your bad temper, of your impatience ? Mere contradictions ? . . but a little reflection will teach you submission : remarks, reproofs ? but if you reflect once more, you will easily perceive that these reproofs are for your good, and that you are wrong not to accept them mildly, and even gratefully.

My children, the virtue of meekness is one of the virtues that are most agreeable to God : it is particularly suitable to childhood, and is in fact one of its greatest charms. Meekness is a

virtue which even here below brings with it its own reward, it makes you beloved ; those who are meek meet with good will on all sides, and our Lord said : “ Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land ! ”

FORTY-FOURTH LESSON.

On Laziness

“ Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom.”—
PROV. vi. 6,

Laziness is an habitual neglect of and a voluntary distaste of our duty.

It is easy to understand, my children, that habitual neglect is far different from mere forgetfulness : you may sometimes fail in fulfilling some of your duties, without being therefore guilty of laziness. The distaste for doing your duty on account of the inconvenience it may cause you, or the difficulty you feel in accomplishing it, if it be involuntary, and if besides you try to overcome it, is not laziness either. But duties neglected out of a kind of languidness and indolence—not performed, because you do not wish to take the least trouble to bear the slightest annoyance—that is being truly lazy, and deserving the reproach of holy Scripture, so shameful to rational beings : *Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom.*

Laziness is also the source of numberless faults : it produces idleness, and we see also in Scripture, that idleness is the mother of every vice.

Laziness also involves loss of time, which is not the same thing as idleness. To lose time is not to remain unemployed : it is not to make a good use of time, by not employing it usefully and according to the will of God. My children, at your age, you do not appreciate the value of time, life seems so long ! its end seems as yet so far off ! you think that you will never reach it, and you are full of confidence in the future to make up for all loss of time. And yet, alas ! who can rely on the future

It belongs to no one, and the present moment is the only one we can dispose of. Learn then now to make good use of it, my children, and be fully persuaded that you will but reap in your after years what you have sown in your childhood.

One of the worst consequences of laziness is lukewarmness. Lukewarmness is a kind of carelessness in the service of God, and in the work of salvation. You pray, but without satisfaction, without fervor; you go to mass, but without devotion. My children, would it be worthy of God to accept such homage? Lukewarmness is not less to be feared in the accomplishment of our other duties. Thus, if you only abstain from what is strictly forbidden, without being desirous of doing good in the practice of good works what do you become? Nought but useless servants, like unto those trees, which our Lord condemned to be burnt, because they bore no good fruit.

My children, you must strive against all inclination to laziness, by showing yourselves very active in your love of occupation and zeal for study. Daily study and regular lessons are particularly opposed to your laziness. Nevertheless the course of your education is begun; and you must go through it to the end, whether you like it or not: why then do you not enter on your studies with that ardor which would make them both interesting and pleasing? Why always think that it is tedious to learn, and never that it may be agreeable to know? Would it please you, some years later, to be noticed for your ignorance? No, no doubt. Well, laziness may have a still sadder result: it may deprive you of the means of being useful to others.

Besides, my dear children, work is a duty, a duty imposed on mankind. God said to us all, as to our first parent: "*In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread.*" It is true, we are not all obliged to labor with our hands, or to till the earth: owing to a sad necessity which kind hearts lament, though ordained by God himself, there are here below rich and poor; some have plenty of everything and without difficulty, whilst others suffer numberless privations, and can earn the bare necessities of life only by dint of hard work; but be not mistaken, my children: even those who have been endowed with

wealth, are none the less obliged to fulfil their task, and obey this law of labor. Look around you : you will see that amongst rational people and those who understand their duty, not a single person but is busy at some work or other, and whose time is usefully employed.

Do you wish then, my children, to be the only ones who do nothing? You who see every one at work, you for whom so many work, will you be always murmuring on account of the ordinary duties imposed upon you? Ah! by so doing you would be guilty of such ingratitude towards Almighty God, who has preferred you before so many others, by allowing you to be born in such a fortunate station of life! You have perhaps never thought of this! perhaps you have never reflected on the hard lot of some children of your age? Well, to cure you of your laziness, I must here say a few words about the labor of the children of the poor, even if by so doing I sadden your young hearts.

The children of the poor, who are most to be pitied, are certainly not those who live in the country; though you may have often met some of them, who starting before daybreak, through snow and bleak winds, bring back to their homes, loads of dry wood, too heavy for their young shoulders. That is one of their winter occupations. In summer, during harvest time, these unfortunate children spend their whole day, bowed to the ground, and scorched by the blazing sun, to glean a few ears of corn. Thus at an early age do they begin a life of labor and fatigue.

And these poor little sweeps, who have come on foot from the country to our cities, in the hope of earning their living, and whom you hear early on winter mornings offering their services in the streets, do you know, my children, why as you cross the road, which they have just swept clean for you, they hold out their blackened hand, saying in a doleful voice: "Please remember the sweeper?"—It is because they generally belong to hard and tyrannical masters, who oblige them to bring home daily a certain sum, and who if they fail in so doing, beat and ill-treat them, besides depriving them very often of their scanty evening meal.

These children are, no doubt, most unhappy ; however, there are others still more so. In woollen, cotton, and silk manufactories, in damp unhealthy workshops, hundreds of young people are crowded together and confined during ten or twelve hours of continual and monotonous labor. Constantly employed at the same work, they become, as we may say, part of the machines near which they toil : their intellect remains stagnant, their health is weakened ; and their heart is often corrupted by the influence of bad example. Many of these poor little ones, separated from their parents, do not know the sweetness of family ties. No one is there to look after them and care for them ; no one loves them. After their day's work, they never meet with a kind word at night, or a caress. Very scanty fare, a little straw to sleep upon : that is what awaits them. The morrow brings back the same wearing task, the same tedious day's work, and so they go on, day after day : such is their life !

And you, my dear children, you are taught music, drawing, history. These attractive studies can already be of deep interest to you, and at a later period, they will become the source of real enjoyment. These lessons are given you either by a kind, gentle, and patient mother, or by indulgent and polite governesses or tutors. The hours of study are regulated according to your strength : and made easy to you by the best methods, during these hours the diversity of your studies makes them more agreeable to you ; they are intermingled with intervals of rest and playtime. Every one of your efforts receives an encouragement, the slightest progress is rewarded, and yet you are lazy ! and you dare complain ! never do so any more. The remembrance of those unhappy little beings condemned to lead such a hard life, will henceforth be ever present to your mind, and will make you ashamed of your indolence ; you will also think of that divine infant Jesus, who though he was God, willingly devoted nearly his whole life to helping St. Joseph in his humble trade. Such an example will leave no excuse for your sloth.

Then, if you happen to meet one of those children, who with

such great hardship earns his daily bread, if you pity his misery as you ought, at least you will not have to blush on your own account. You will be able to say to yourselves: "I also work, if not like you, poor little fellow, at least as much as my parents wish, as much as God requires of me."

FORTY-FIFTH LESSON.

On Patience and Courage.

"In your patience you shall possess your souls."—ST. LUKE XXI. 19.

Is there any one amongst you, my children, whose heart is not touched by the account of some fine action, of some act of generosity or courage? Is there a single one who can help being struck with admiration at the heroic constancy of the martyrs; the warlike valor of heroes? Most assuredly, it is natural that these grand recollections should produce a vivid impression on children, whose education has been cared for, and should inspire them with the wish one day to imitate such noble examples. But it is a great mistake to think that courage is only useful during war, or in very great perils. You must show courage even in the most ordinary and habitual circumstances of life. Courage, my dear children, is not only self-reliance, valor, audacity: it is also resignation and meekness under disappointments and sufferings; it is the effort made over self to accomplish a duty. These different kinds of courage are necessary to every one, and at every age. Even children often find opportunities of exercising them. Let us try to convince you of this by familiar examples chosen from your own experience.

You are expecting a day's treat. The time comes; some unexpected circumstance overthrows all your plans: the weather is bad; your friends could not come. It is hard, I know, to give up a long-expected pleasure; but after all, it is no one's fault,

and it cannot be helped. Is it then courageous, is it even right, to be in despair about a slight disappointment, as if it were a real misfortune, to be all day long in a bad temper and cross—to make others suffer for a disappointment they have had nothing to do with? To be courageous in this case, my children, would be to accept cheerfully the state of things, and to say: “Well, another time we shall be more fortunate!” the true Christian child would even say: “My God, I have sometimes offended thee during my recreations: is it for this reason thou spoilest my amusement to-day? May thy holy will be done!”

The sufferings to which we are exposed, my children, give us other opportunities of exercising our patience. Good or bad health comes equally from God: we must take advantage of each, to work out our salvation, and further the designs of Providence.

The first thing to be done in sickness, is to submit to the holy and ever adorable will of God; to accept with calmness and resignation, from the hand of God, the sufferings he sends you. You will not dare complain too much of your state, my dear children, if you reflect on the tortures our Lord endured for our sake. The tranquillity arising from these pious thoughts will alleviate your sufferings, whilst, on the contrary, agitation, or impatience, would undoubtedly increase them, and would thus render your case more difficult to cure.

A second duty of invalids, is not to refuse what the doctors prescribe, and to submit to the precautions they recommend. Though this may be ever so disagreeable, it is still more painful to suffer. And besides, if this reason be not sufficient for you, dear children, try to submit for your parents' sake, for your parents who are so grieved to see you ill, and who can only be rewarded for their tender care by your return to health. My children, do not, as some children too often do, let the period of your convalescence be a time entirely given up to caprice and idleness. If it be impossible to resume your studies, at least try to busy your mind with salutary reflections. How many poor children, for instance, have not, like you when they are ill, kind parents and affectionate friends to take care of them, talented

medical men to prescribe for them, a warm bed to lie down in, and many means of amusement.

If you had never been ill yourselves, perhaps you would never have pitied those that are ailing. Perhaps also you never would have known, as now, how dear you are to your family.

These are really the good effects of sufferings endured with courage.

You see, my children, we are in constant need of this virtue. Be careful to acquire it; try every day to exercise it on yourselves.

Your defects or sinful inclinations are the enemies you must fight: be full of zeal to conquer them. Instead of that praiseworthy ardor, which is but too often wanting, alas! try to show at least that good will which is a kind of courage; this virtue, will neither be seen or admired by others, but God, who leaves no effort unrewarded, will know how to reward you.

FORTY-SIXTH LESSON.

On The Catholic Church.

“He that heareth you, heareth me.”—ST. LUKE x. 16.

When the Church is spoken of, my children, it is not always the house of the Lord that is alluded to, it is not always the holy temple in which you offer up your prayers to God that is spoken of. The word *Church* signifies a coming together. This name is given to the *assembly* of the faithful, and is also used to indicate the authority of the ecclesiastical superiors. When, for instance, is said the will of the Church, the commandments of the Church, that means the laws established by the pastors to govern the faithful.

The Church, as the catechism teaches, is then the society of the faithful, who under the guidance of the legitimate pastors, form but one body, of which Jesus Christ is the head. I am about to try to make you fully understand this explanation.

First of all, the *Faithful* are those who are baptized and who believe in Jesus Christ. The assembly of the faithful forms a holy society. Though unknown to each other, though not even living in the same country, they are united like the members of the same family. They all receive the same instruction, the same sacrament; they all offer up the same prayers, love the same God, hope to receive from him the same happiness. To appreciate this perfect union between the faithful, it is said, my children, that they form a single body.

The faithful are directed by chiefs called *Pastors*, because they lead God's flock. The Pope or Sovereign Pontiff is the head pastor of the Church. He is the successor of Saint Peter. He is the prince chief, not only of the faithful, but even of all the other Pastors. In everything that concerns religion we owe him our full obedience. Under him come the Archbishops and Bishops, then the simple Priests, whose charge consists in helping the prelates in their holy ministry.

All these pastors are called *legitimate*, because they are established by God himself, and chosen with the help of the Holy Ghost.

Jesus Christ, my children, is the supreme Head of the Church. He governs it from his exalted station in heaven, and though he be invisible, we cannot doubt his divine guidance. It is by God's power alone, in fact, that twelve poor ignorant fishermen were enabled to lay the foundations of the Church. It is merely by God's grace, that the Church has been preserved, notwithstanding the numberless obstacles and persecutions of her enemies; and it is because the Church is still inspired by the spirit of God that she always teaches the truth to the faithful. It is a great misfortune, my children, that every man is not a Christian, and that all Christians are not children of the Church. There are still countries where God is unknown: there are idolatrous nations. There are also people who adore God, but who refuse to believe that his divine Son has already come on earth: these are the Jews and the Mahomedans. There are also men who have cast from their creed some of the truths taught by the Church, and who no longer submit to her authority: such are

the heretics and schismatics, generally known by the name of Protestants. These different societies all believe they teach the truth and call themselves the true Church: they are all wrong, my children. Our Church only is Jesus Christ's and that is the Catholic, Apostolical, and Roman Church.

It is called *catholic* (this word means universal) because it will last until the end of all time, and that it is the Church which has spread itself the most over the universe; *apostolical*, because its precepts come from the apostles, and that its ministers are their successors; *Roman*, because the Pope, head of the Church, resides at Rome.

My dear friends, the Church can never make a mistake in what she teaches us. The promise of Jesus Christ himself makes us rest assured of this. Our Lord orders us to submit to the Church as to himself: "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me," said our Lord to the Apostles. Thus the Commandments of the Church, my children, are no less binding to you than those of God. Nevertheless, on account of your age, you are to be dispensed from many of them, but you must scrupulously and punctually fulfil the others, and be ready, when the time comes, to keep every one of them faithfully. This faithfulness is not only a strict duty, but it also gives us the means of showing our gratitude towards God, for having granted us the grace of being born in the true Church.

My children, no happiness can be greater than this, and we cannot thank God too often for it. But we must remember to benefit by this grace, so as to work out our salvation; otherwise the Lord would have right to judge us more severely than the others.

You must not forget either, my dear children, that to be a Catholic is a blessing, and not a merit; we have neither the right to glorify ourselves on being a member of the true Church, or that of despising others who do not belong to it. You must pity those who err, and pray God to bring them back to the right road, the only one that leads to heaven. If you should happen to be brought up with children of a different creed, take care, my children, not to tease them about their belief. But be mind-

ful to set them a good example ; show them that a Catholic child is the meekest, the best, the most amiable of children ; thus you will make them love your holy religion.

FORTY-SEVENTH LESSON.

Feast of All Saints.

“ For we are the children of saints.”—TOBIAS viii. 5.

The very name of this feast, my dear children, teaches you what it is, and for whom it was instituted. It is the feast of all the saints, which means the feast of those whose virtues have been crowned by the bliss of heaven. These happy beings who enjoy eternal peace, are our brothers still ; like us in life, they were children of the Church, and the bond that existed between them and us has not been severed by death. That is why the Church has placed each day of the year under the special protection of a saint. That is why also she gives each new-born child, one of heaven's elect as a protector and a model ; but being unacquainted either with the name or history of numbers of saints of every age and nation, the Church unites all her children in her memory, and honors them all in one solemn feast. Her purpose then, on this day, is to honor the saints by her homage and her praise, and in order that this feast may make an impression on us, she encourages us to follow the examples of the saints, by the prospect of that eternal bliss, which is their reward, and at the same time she prays to them to protect us before God.

So you see that the Church congratulates the saints on the glory and happiness which is their lot, she manifests her joy at their having gloriously ended all their trials, and at their having triumphed in all their struggles, for you must know, my children, that the saints have not won heaven without effort and labor. Some, for God's holy name, have suffered death like the martyrs, in the most horrible tortures ; others, like the apos-

ties, have spent their whole lives in arduous tasks, undertaking long and dangerous journeys, to preach the Gospel to idolatrous nations; numbers of pious hermits have given to the poor all they possessed, accepting poverty themselves, to be like Jesus Christ. Last of all, good Sisters of Charity have devoted all their time to the care of the sick, to the education of poor children, and even those amongst the elect, who have not practised virtue quite so perfectly, or at least not so conspicuously, have yet become saints by merely fulfilling their everyday duties faithfully; for even that requires great attention and courage. The saints have overcome the evil spirit. God rewards them: this is why we honor them on this day. Alas! my children, our lives have a very faint resemblance to the lives of the saints who have left us such precious examples! We are not all, it is true, called upon to become monks, priests, hermits, or martyrs; but saints have been met with in all stations of life in which any one of us may be placed. There have been saints of every age, and you also, my dear children, can find examples amongst the elect.

Many saints in heaven were children like you, having no other duties to perform but such as yours only they performed them better. They did not accomplish great actions in the sight of men, but they loved God fervently, and were dutiful towards their parents. Most certainly they had faults to correct, bad inclinations to battle against; but their good will, sustained by our Lord's help, enabled them to obtain the victory. What they were able to do, my dear children, can you not do likewise?

For this purpose pray to the saints to-day for the courage of which you stand in need. They have not really the power to grant us grace, but they can ask it for us and with us; and you can neither doubt the interest they take in our sanctification, nor their power before God, whose friends they are.

The next life, and not this, is the life of rest; while we are here, we must both fight and conquer, if we would be crowned hereafter. Let us then take courage; let us, like the saints persevere, and fight manfully; and let us persevere in this warfare to the end of our lives, and obtain the eternal reward promised to the virtuous.

FORTY-EIGHTH LESSON.

All Souls.

"It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead."—
MACCH. xii. 44.

To be saved, my dear children, to partake of the eternal happiness of those saints of whom we were speaking yesterday, we must either have preserved perfect innocence, or else have regained it, for nothing impure saith the Lord, can enter the kingdom of heaven. God in his mercy forgives us the sins of which we sincerely repent and confess, but he does not exempt us from atoning for them, and only remits part of the expiation they deserve. It remains then for us to do penance, and if we have not had the courage to do it in this world, we shall undergo it in the next, by the torments of purgatory. Purgatory, my children, is a place of suffering, where God sends those poor souls who have not deserved hell, but who are not pure enough to enter heaven. There, in great suffering, they do the penance they ought to have done on earth; the latter would have been less painful, and not so long. Then it is they regret the lost time, and that want of energy which prevented their following the dictates of religion during their lifetime.

God leaves souls in purgatory, for a longer or shorter period of time, according to the number of sins they have to atone for; but the Church teaches us that we can shorten the sufferings of these souls, by praying for them, and particularly by offering to God in their behalf the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Not only does the Church pray at the end of all her services for those who are no more, but she also consecrates to their memory one whole day every year; this day is the one following the feast of All Saints, to remind us that we, the Christians on earth, who ask for the protection of the Christians in heaven, must not forget those who are in purgatory, because, as we are all children of the same family, we must mutually help one another.

My children, this day is a sad one: it reminds us of the rela-

tions and friends we have lost, whom we so dearly loved, and whom we shall so long remain without seeing—to-day we weep over the graves of those well beloved dead, and beg their forgiveness of God, if unfortunately they be still far from him. And you, my dear children, who in a great measure at least, do not as yet know this cruel grief, the loss of loved ones, pray for the relations and friends of others, for those whom your mother regrets, and in general for all the dead. It is a duty of charity, and the poor souls whose sufferings you have contributed to shorten, when once in heaven, remembering your piety, will intercede for you in return.

If this instruction were read over, by any bereaved orphans, they would feel that gratitude obliges them to pray to God for the parents they have lost ; and this duty will seem to them to be most easy to fulfill. Think indeed what a consolation it is for those poor children, to be able to hope that those to whom they owe their life, and whose tenderness had lavished such care and so much love on their early years, will be indebted to their fervent prayers for eternal happiness !

After having fulfilled your duties towards the dead, my children, seek out for yourselves some useful lesson in the thought of purgatory. First of all, bear well in mind how deeply God abhors sin, since he obliges us to atone for all evil doing, so as to blot out the smallest marks of sin, and may this thought induce you to commit it less easily. Then after this, finally resolve to do penance for your sins during this life, so that God may look upon you, as worthy of heaven after death.

FORTY-NINTH LESSON.

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

“Behold thy mother.”—ST. JOHN xix. 27.

Most holy Virgin Mary, I am now about to speak to my children of thy glory and of thy love, about to teach them to cherish

thee, to pray to thee. Thou knowest that the dearest wish of my heart would be to instil into their young minds that strong and tender devotion towards thee, which here below is both our safeguard and our support. But to ensure success, O Mary, I require the help of thy mighty protection, and I implore it to-day. Vouchsafe to bless this instruction, so that it may have the power to persuade and to save; vouchsafe also to bless these dear children, who will soon, I hope, love thee with the same veneration they bear their mother; grant that under thy protection they may grow in goodness and in innocence, by the side of the infant Jesus.

The whole of our devotion towards the Blessed Virgin may be wound up, in the two names so often given her by the Church: "*Mary mother of God; Mary our Mother.*" We must therefore honor Mary as the mother of God and implore her power; we should love Mary as a tender mother, and confide in her goodness.

What grandeur is to be compared to that of being the Mother of God, my children? Have you ever thought of this? Will you ever be able to realize it thoroughly? The Blessed Virgin gave birth to God made man to save us. She nursed and carried in her arms the Holy One who created the world; and the God whom all obey in heaven and on earth was obedient to her. If we show great honor to princes, and to all those who rank high in the world, how much more respect, praise and honor, ought we not to show Mary, who is so far above all other creatures in her glory, to Mary the Queen of the Angels, seated in heaven beside the throne of God.

After glorifying the Blessed Virgin as the mother of God, let us, my children, have recourse to her divine protection; let us implore her power. Jesus was, on earth, the model of a good son; his first miracle was done at his mother's desire. It is for our good, that Jesus wishes his mother to be in heaven the instrument of his favors. He wishes her always to plead for us, without fear of being refused: and so, my children, see the confidence of all Christians in the power of the Blessed Virgin.

When the earth is drenched by too much rain, or dried up by

the heat, so that the farmer is afraid of having a bad harvest ; when a destroying plague rages over a whole city : every one calls aloud to Mary, her banner is raised up, and long processions follow it everywhere, while crowds surround her altars. Fervent prayers are addressed to Mary ; to Mary, called by the Church at all times *Help of Christians*.

When a family is in grief and full of anxiety at seeing one of its members dangerously ill, to whom are prayers addressed, to obtain the loved one's return to health ? To Mary, *Health of the sick*.

When any unhappy creature feels ready to sink under the weight of some deep sorrow, to whom does he open his bruised heart ? To Mary, *Comforter of the afflicted*.

And last of all, the culprit who weeps over his fault, and who still fears God's justice, to whom can he turn for comfort ? To Mary, *Refuge of sinners*.

Yes, my children, in all his wants, his troubles, his ailings, and, alas ! in his shortcomings, at each instant of his life, and in the hour of death, the Christian turns to Mary. Her name alone comforts him, and gives him confidence : he loves to pronounce it. Can this surprise us ? No my children, not in the least ; Mary is all powerful, for she is the mother of God ; she is also full of goodness, for she is our mother. What mother shows more tenderness to her children ? Never is she implored in vain ; never does she turn a deaf ear to our prayers. Thus it is that the faithful are eager to show their gratitude, by creating everywhere magnificent monuments to glorify her. In Catholic countries, there is not a village without a chapel, an altar, or some simple image consecrated to Mary ; not a single place where she is not venerated under the names of *Our Lady of Good Hope*, *Our Lady of Deliverance*, *Our Lady of Consolation*, *of Miracles*, *of Piety*.

There are chapels where, at stated times every year, thousands of the faithful come on pilgrimages, from afar and on foot. My children, let us follow them. How happy are these good pilgrims when at the end of their long journey, they perceive in the midst of the trees the roof of the humble chapel in which they

hope to obtain a long-wished-for grace! They enter it singing the praise of the Mother of God, and kneel in crowds on the stone pavement.

The faithful who have visited this chapel before them, have left affecting testimonies of their gratitude to Mary for the favors obtained through her prayers.

Numbers of pictures, inscriptions, votive offerings, cover the walls and the pillars. The statue of the blessed Virgin, placed above the altar, is covered with splendid garments, and on the neck of the infant Jesus, who is in her arms, hangs the modest silver cross, sole ornament of the poor fisherman's wife. Sailors saved from a dreadful shipwreck, offer Mary a little boat in carved wood. A poor young cripple, led formerly by his parents has in this holy place regained strength and health; in remembrance of his miraculous cure, he hangs up near Mary's altar his now useless crutches. The recollection of this miracle, the sight of these poor offerings, help to increase still more the fervor and confidence of the pilgrims.

At present, my dear children, you have neither a pilgrimage to make or a miracle to ask for; but you are in need of many graces, more precious still than those who have but health in view.

Unfortunately, you are still mastered by many faults which prevent your becoming the pious and dutiful child God wishes you to be. To be able to cure yourselves of them you must implore the Blessed Virgin. Pray to her unceasingly, address yourselves to her lovingly, with entire and filial confidence. You are, her children, both by the will of God, and by the wish of your own mother. At your birth, her piety consecrated you to the Blessed Virgin, and called down on your head her divine blessings. Poor mother! she was fully aware that her most devoted care, even the sacrifice of her life, could not preserve you from all danger, obtain for you every grace; that is why, from your earliest years, she wished to place you under the protection of Mary, the most powerful and best of mothers.

We cannot honor the Blessed Virgin better, my dear children, than by trying to reproduce in our conduct the virtues of which

she has left us so many examples, for she prefers our sanctification to our homage. However, it is our duty to glorify Mary by the prayers the Church addresses to her, and by the holy practices established in her honor. Not being able to explain them all here, I shall merely speak of two of them : the *Angelical salutation*, and the holy *Rosary*.

The *Angelical salutation* is a part of our daily prayers. The Church places it in the lips of her children directly after the *Lord's prayer*, no doubt to show how dear it is to her. This prayer is called the *Angelical salutation* or *Hail Mary*, because it begins by the words the angel Gabriel addressed to the Blessed Virgin when announcing to her that she was to become the mother of God. We repeat the Angel's words, because we know of none more glorious for our mother. We hail from the depths of our heart this Virgin full of grace, so beloved by the Lord, mother of the divine Infant who came to save us ; and then remembering our pressing need of her support, we add with the Church : Holy Mary, mother of God, be also our mother, pray for us, for us poor sinners, now that thy protection is so necessary to us, and also in the hour of our death ; that we may be united to thee in heaven.

Amidst the practices of devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, one of those, which are the most generally adopted among Christians, is the *Rosary*, of which the *Beads* are an abridgment. This devotion is a very ancient one, my children ; it was inspired to St. Dominic by God himself, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, as a powerful means to convert heretics, who were then very numerous ; and who, unfortunately, used to attack religion in every country. Such miraculous effects were obtained by this prayer, that it soon spread all over the Church, and was adopted by the greatest saints and the most powerful sovereigns. I can not recommend to you too highly this holy practise : use it from your childhood. No doubt the whole of the Rosary would fatigue your attention, but a single decade, ten *Hail Marys*, said daily and piously, cannot be so very difficult, and will draw on you the blessings of Mary.

You will perhaps meet with some persons, who are not, like



THE HOLY ROSARY.

The Christian Mother's Child—From Earth to Heaven



UT Jesus said unto them: Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come unto me; for the kingdom of heaven is for such.—*St. Matthew xix. 14.*

The best beloved of the Lord shall dwell confidently in him.—*Deuteronomy xxxiii. 12.*

Shall I be able to bring him back any more? I shall go to him rather: but he shall not return to me.—*II. Kings xii. 23.*

For the girl is not dead, but sleepeth.—*St. Matthew ix. 24.*

And night shall be no more.—*Apocalypse xvii. 5.*

THE DYING CHILD'S FAREWELL

I die so soon, and yet I die
To win the crown of Life;
And mine—how soon the victory,
How brief my hour of strife!
My soul a flow'ret, dewy, sweet,
Shall blossom at the Saviour's feet!

His—ransomed in the saving tide
Of His own precious blood,
And purged from stain of Adam's guilt
In sacramental flood.
My legacy—Eternal Rest
Upon the Saviour's faithful breast!

When to my little grave you come,
Dear parents, now so sad,
Your faith and hope must stronger grow,
Your trusting hearts more glad;
For just beyond the grave I'll wait
To greet you at the Golden Gate.

From shortened pain to lasting joys
Death's welcome summons calls;
E'en now, upon my list'ning ear
Angelic music falls.
My soul responds with longing love;
Farewell! Weep not! We meet above!

My grateful mem'ry e'er shall cling
About you day by day,
For all the selfless joys you've cast
Upon my life's short way.
God bless your love, so strong and true!
Farewell! In Heaven I'll pray for you.

Dear friends, whose ling'ring gaze I meet
As here in death I lie,
Learn ye the one important task
Of life—the "How" to die;
That, when you too are called to go,
Death may not have a single throes!

Sacred to the Memory of

Our beloved child

Born

Departed this life

THE REWARD OF THE CHRISTIAN FATHER



S a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him.—*Psalm cii. 13.*

Keep innocence and behold justice: for there are remnants for the peaceable man.—*Psalm xxxvi. 37.*

For thee my flesh and my heart have fainted away: thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.—*Psalm lxxii. 26.*

For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man is corrupted: yet the inward man is renewed day by day.—*II. Corinthians, iv. 16.*

Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life.—*Apocalypse ii. 10.*

THE DYING FATHER'S FAREWELL:

God calls me, and I may not stay;
The sands of life are nearly run.
Its joys were few, its sorrows long;
'Tis over now,—my task is done.
'Tis our Heavenly Father's will;
I die—and dying, praise Him still.

Dear heart, that beat so true to mine
Through all our happy wedded years,
May not my grateful love assuage
Your grief, and dry your bitter tears?
God keep you, bless you, from on high,
When mould'ring in the tomb I lie.

O mother-heart, cease your repining!
The future is in God's own hand.
Fear not! He feeds the crying raven:
Can he forsake our little band?
What our united strength has done—
Can He not do, the Mighty One?

And you, my children, you who weep
Around your father's dying bed,
Fear not the morrow; it will bring
A blessing on each little head
Your mother's stay and solace be,
And leave the rest to God and me!

Her loving hand in helpless years
Will for your ev'ry need provide,
And you, when age has set its seal
Upon her brow, stay by her side,
Nor let your foot from duty stray;
God's blessing linger on your way!

Farewell! until your summons calls
To leave this world of sin and pain;
Till in the realms of endless bliss,
At home with God, we meet again:
We'll meet where parting is unknown
Before our Heavenly Father's throne.

Sacred to the Memory of

Our beloved father.....

Born.....

Departed this life.....

THE REWARD OF THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER



HER children rose up and called her blessed: her husband and he praised her.—*Proverbs, xxxi. 28.*

I spake with my tongue: O Lord, make me know my end, and what is the number of my days; that I may know what is wanting in me.—*Psalms xxxviii. 5.*

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me; write: Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: for their works follow them.—*Apocalypse xiv. 13.*

THE DYING MOTHER'S FAREWELL

The parting hour—alas! how soon

It comes, ere life seems well begun.

My busy heart and hand still find

So many things they would have done.

God calls!—I lay the burden down,

And hasten to the beck'ning crown.

Dear partner of my wedded life,

Companion of my joys and tears,

Farewell! I leave our little flock

To God and thee for coming years.

For them my life was gladly spent,

On them my dying look is bent.

Poor darlings! How I fain would clasp

You to my yearning heart so warm

And hasten to our heavenly home,

Away, away from sin and harm.

Farewell! Weep not! Be good and true!

A mother's love will watch o'er you.

Before our Heavenly Father's throne

My prayers shall rise by day and night

That He may keep you in His love

And guide your falt'ring steps aright

Be not afraid! His loving hand

Is mighty as an armed band.

Your hearts, still pure and innocent,

Have not yet tasted bitter care;

Your feet have trod the paths of peace

'Mid bloom of childhood's fancy fair

Life's sterner duties wait you now;

God wills it so! Be strong and bow.

Bow when the cross seems hard to bear;

Submissive lift your trustful eyes;

Remember that your mother's prayer

Ascends for you beyond the skies.

Farewell, dear hearts! Be strong and true!

The crown awaits both me and you!

Sacred to the Memory of

Our beloved mother.....

Born.....

Departed this life.....



SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF
Our Beloved Mother.

Here
Respects this life.

The parting hour—alas! how soon
It comes, ere life seems well begun.
My busy heart and hand still find
So many things they would have done.
God call!—lay the burden down,
And haste to the best—ving crown.

Dear partner of my wedded life,
Companion of my joys and tears,
Farewell! I leave our little flock
To God and thee, for coming years.
For them my life was gladly spent;
On them my dying look is bent.

Poor darling! How I fain would clasp
Thee to my yearning breast as warm,
And haste to our Heavenly Home,
Away, away from sin and harm.
Farewell! Weep not! Be good and true!
A mother's love will watch o'er you.

Before our Heavenly Father's throne
My prayers shall rise by day and night.
That He may keep you in His love,
And guide your feet—step—step—right
Be not afraid! His loving hand
Is mighty as an armed hand.

Your heart, still pure and innocent,
Have not yet tasted bitter care.
Your feet have trod the path of peace
His bloom of childhood—fancy—fair.
Life's storms distress will soon
God wills it so! Be strong and true.

Now when the cross seems hard to bear;
Remember that your mother's prayer
Is for you beyond the skies.
Farewell, dear heart! Be strong and true.
The crown awaits both me and you!

THE REWARD OF THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER.



ST. WALBURGA.

you, in the habit of practising this old and simple act of devotion : "What is the good," will they say, "to repeat thus the same prayer? the rosary is of use only to those who do not know how to read, it is the prayer of the poor." Such is often the language of the world.

Why repeat always the same prayer? Well, my children, the poor blind man seated on the road by which Jesus was to pass, did not vary his prayer more than we do, when he implored our Lord : "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" and he was cured.

The rosary is only good for those who know not how to read : it is the prayer of the poor ! What then, O Lord ! are there to be prayers for the wealthy and prayers for the poor? At the foot of thine altar ought not holy equality reign? Are we not, O my God, all of us in thine eyes poor creatures, covered with sins, overwhelmed with wants? The rosary is the prayer of the poor ! but that is exactly what makes it so dear to me, and that is why I love to say it, so much the better, yes—so much the better, my children, if, thanks to the simplicity of our prayers, and at sight of the humble rosary we hold in our hands, the Lord may take us for some poor people ! Blessed, a thousand times blessed, should we be if we have some kind of resemblance to those good poor, who are themselves the image of Jesus Christ.

FIFTIETH LESSON.

On Angels.

"Behold I will send my Angel, who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place that I have prepared."—Exod. xxiii. 20.

My children, angels are creatures with whom God has peopled heaven, and who are its inhabitants, as we are those of earth. Angels, however, are not like us ; they are pure spirits without

bodies; these spirits, like our souls, are immaterial, so that we can neither see nor touch them.

God created a multitude of these angels, who were destined for ever to glorify and bless him in heaven; but the chief of them, believing that he could be equal to God in power, revolted against him, and involved a great number of other Angels in his disobedience. God, who hates pride, drove from heaven all these rebels, and precipitated them into hell. There they have neither pardon nor mercy to expect: Our Lord did not die upon the Cross for their salvation. Though no doubt, on account of our weakness, our sins are treated with more indulgence, yet this example of divine justice, my children, ought to make us tremble.

The faithful Angels remained in heaven, and, as their reward, God confirmed them in grace. Do you understand, my children, what happiness there is, not only in never having the wish to disobey God, and to be confirmed in grace. This bliss will be ours if one day we have the happiness of joining the Angels in heaven.

There are, then, good and bad angels, the good, ever near celestial light, the bad doomed to everlasting darkness. Those who are called demons, on account of their wickedness, are in eternal torment, because they can never see God and can never do anything but evil. They find a cruel delight in drawing mankind into wrong actions, thus trying to make us all as miserable as they are themselves. One of these demons, you know, caused the sin of our first parent, and it is also these demons who, by their temptations, try every day to make us fail in our duty. Let us then, my children, most carefully avoid temptations, and listen to our conscience, which warns us against the suggestions of wickedness.

The good Angels are happy in heaven with God, whom they love and bless without ceasing, and whose will they accomplish. The name *Angel* signifies *messenger*, one who is sent; and in truth, Angels have often been sent on earth to be the executors of God's justice and of his mercies. You remember the Angel placed at the gate of the terrestrial paradise to defend its

entrance ; another who, sparing the children of Israel, put to death in one single night the eldest born of the Egyptians ; the angel who arrested Abraham's arm about to sacrifice his only son ; another who guided young Tobias on his pious journey ; and last of all, those who, by their celestial music, made known to the shepherds of Bethlehem the birth of the Saviour of the world. In all these different circumstances, God allowed his Angels to show themselves to mankind. It is now very long since any of them have appeared on earth ; but we know that they watch over us, and that there are even some who have the particular charge of protecting us. These are called by the Church our Guardian Angels.

As soon as a little child comes into the world, God appoints one of these beautiful Angels, who keeps watch over his cradle. He preserves his early years from the dangers which threaten him ; he takes care of him in sickness, consoles him later in his sorrows, helps him to do what is right and to shun evil ; and all that by the means of God's grace, which the Angels are ordered to instil into our hearts. Our Guardian Angel offers up our prayers to God, asks him to reward our virtues ; weeps over our sins, and joins with us in imploring divine forgiveness. Finally, when the hour of death draws nigh, my children, he upholds our courage, softens our last trials, and soars away with our souls on the road to heaven.

FIFTY-FIRST LESSON.

On Death.

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”—APOC. xiv. 13.

My dear children, all that is born must die ; such is the law of nature. The loftiest trees, those under which your forefathers have perhaps sat down, and which seem still so strong and healthy, will some day droop and wither away. In the morning

we admire flowers which at night are faded, and their beauty does not last more than one day : insects live through a season only, the strongest of animals but a few years. Man dies also, my children ; but he had been created to be immortal, and God had destined him to an existence of eternal happiness.

Adam lost this divine privilege through his disobedience ; and as a punishment for the sin of our first parent, all mankind was condemned to die. God's mercy has, however, softened the severity of this sentence ; only our body dies ; and even that not for ever.

Death, my children, is the separation of the soul from the body it animated during life : this mortal part of our self becomes cold and insensible ; it is buried in the earth, where it soon becomes corrupted ; and nothing remains but a little dust. Meanwhile the soul, created after the image and likeness of God, the soul by means of which we think, we remember and we love, never ceases to live. Disengaged from the bonds which retained it in captivity in this earthly body, it flies directly to God, to receive from him its chastisement or its reward. When the world will end, our bodies, raised from the dead by divine omnipotence, will be once more united to our souls, never more to be separated from them.

Man knows that he cannot escape death ; but he remains in entire ignorance of the moment at which it will overtake him. God is the master of life and death : our destiny is in his hands. We cannot, alas ! rely upon either health or youth : and if some men leave this earth only when full of years, it often happens also that the Lord calls to him quite little children, to increase the number of his Angels.

"Blessed," says Jesus Christ, "blessed is that servant, whom when his Lord shall come, he will find watching!"—Yes, my children, no doubt that man will be blessed, who behaves every day as if he were to die in the night. As a reward for his virtuous life, God will grant him that most precious of all blessings, a holy death.

A true Christian, a good and pious child, sees nothing dreadful in death. It is the beginning of a life of happiness ; it is the

entrance into the land of promise, after a long journey. The only real sad trial in death is the parting from those we love. Towards the latter end of autumn, when the trees lose their foliage, and the beginning of winter is felt, we see the swallows fly off together towards a milder climate. If, like them, my children, we could thus collect together all our friends, our family, and not be obliged to leave them, when the time comes, and we must quit this world for another, which of us would then regret to die?

Unfortunately, alas! we leave this life one by one, and this last, this long parting, causes us a very cruel pang. But in those days of sadness and of mourning, religion comes to the assistance of the one who departs, and of the bereaved who remain. Religion has a balm for all our wounds; gives us the consoling thought that we shall one day meet again, and that, in heaven, we shall be able to love each other still. Christians then must not grieve like those who have no hope. This is the advice of St. Paul.

This advice had been followed by a poor mother, who reaped therefrom deep consolation after the loss of a much loved one. You will no doubt be as affected as I was myself by what she told me about it. While travelling, I met this woman near a village, at which I stayed. Her clothes bespoke her poverty; she came near me to beg. I questioned her about her wants: "Have you then a large family to provide for?" "I have five children, Ma'am," she answered; "four are with me: here they are." Then raising her eyes to heaven with a sweet smile of pious resignation she added: "The fifth is the happiest: he is with God and the Angels!"

This poor bereaved mother wept bitterly no doubt when her son died; but she believed him absent and not lost; he was still reckoned as one of the family, and the thought of the happiness of this beloved child, the hope of seeing him hereafter, had partly consoled her.

You see, then, the necessity of being prepared for death, if we hope to attain eternal happiness. "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching."

FIFTY-SECOND LESSON.

On Judgment and Eternity.

“The hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God.”—ST. JOHN v. 28.

My children, when last we talked together, I tried to reconcile you to the thought of death, by representing it merely as a short passage to a better life; for I firmly hope, that sooner or later, each and all of you will have a share in eternal happiness. But you are, I suppose, fully aware that such a reward must be deserved. God, who is supremely just, could not grant such bliss to souls unworthy of heaven, and accordingly, after our death, God will pass judgment upon each of us—you, me, and all mankind. On what shall we be judged, my dear children? On the use we shall have made of that life he had granted us. As soon as we shall have drawn our last breath, our soul will fly to God, who will then open the book of the holy law, and another, on which are inscribed men's actions. Then, comparing our behavior with our duties, he will see how we have benefited by the good education we have received, by the good example set us on all sides, by the good inclinations he had placed in our hearts, rendering virtue thereby easier to us. He will see if the sins our weakness has caused us to commit have been redeemed by true repentance, atoned for by good deeds. Our fate during all eternity will be decided on by this examination, through which you, my children, and every man will have to pass after death, and that the Church calls the personal or particular judgment.

This first judgment will be confirmed by the last judgment, which according to the Gospel will be announced by startling and alarming signs. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself speaks thus of this awful day: “When the Son of Man shall come in his majesty, and all the Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set

the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels!"

In another part of the Gospel, our Lord again compares the separation of the good from the wicked, to the harvest time. At this season the master of the fields says to the reapers: "Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn."

My children, what can we do to escape the due chastisement of sin, to be one day placed on the side of the sheep, to be gathered like the pure wheat and placed in the barns of the Master? Nothing else but fulfil the duties of our position and of our age, do daily and hourly the will of God, return sincerely to him, as soon as we have had the misfortune to commit sin. Then if, in thinking of the last judgment, you cannot overcome a feeling of fear, for even the most perfect souls cannot help dreading divine justice, this fear at least, does not do away with all confidence; it sustains, it encourages, it corrects without despairing; and the Christian who has done his best in this life, can confidently place his eternal future in the hands of God, whose goodness is a thousand times greater than our weakness.

The thought and the desire of heaven, still more than the sentiment of fear, my dear children, should direct our actions, help us to practise virtue and fulfil faithfully our duties. Heaven is the abode of our Father, of that God whom so many mercies have taught us to love. In heaven, where we shall see him, where our souls will be taught to know him thoroughly, we shall be enabled to love him still more, and we shall love him for ever. In his holy abode no sufferings, no tears, and, above all, no sins will ever more exist. This is the bliss of heaven, of which St. Paul said: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."

FIFTY-THIRD LESSON.

That there is no true happiness except in serving God.

“Peace be to you.” (JOHN XX. 19, 21.)

Both Religion and experience teach, that, when you wander from God for the sake of enjoying the riches, or honors, or pleasures of this life, you wander, at the same time, from peace and happiness ; you wander therefore from that very thing which you seek ; you labor under a fatal delusion, deceiving your own selves.

The object which men have in view in their pursuits is happiness. Very often, indeed, they falsely imagine, that their happiness consists in the very things which can only make them restless and unhappy : still, what they seek after, in their various pursuits, is what they look upon as a good to them, as something which will render them content and satisfied, or make them happy.

Thus, it is in the possession and enjoyment of wealth, that some seek their happiness ; others seek it in the gaining of worldly honors ; and others, again, in the enjoyment of false pleasures.

Thus, you see, all have one and the same object in view—their own good, their own happiness. They seek it, indeed, in different ways, and in different things ; but still, all of them have either true or false happiness in view.

But do they succeed in gaining the object of their pursuit ? Are they content and satisfied, so as to want nothing more to make them happy ? Was ever any one happy in the possession and enjoyment of earthly things ?

In the Sacred Scriptures, we read of the greatness, the wisdom, and the wealth of Solomon, and how he endeavored to derive happiness from these advantages. He himself tells us, that he said in his heart : “I will go and abound with delights and enjoy good things. I made me great works ; I built me houses, and planted vineyards ; I made gardens, and orchards, and set them with trees of all kinds. I got me men-servants,

and maid-servants ; and herds of oxen, and great flocks of sheep, above all that were before me in Jerusalem. I heaped together for myself silver and gold, and the wealth of kings and provinces ; and I surpassed in riches all that were before me in Jerusalem my wisdom also remained with me. And whatsoever my eyes desired, I refused them not ; and I withheld not my heart from enjoying every pleasure, and delighting itself in the things which I had prepared. And when I turned myself to all the works which my hands had wrought, and to the labors wherein I had labored in vain, *I saw in all things vanity, and vexation of mind.*" (Eccles. ii.) Thus, he who had all the advantages, which this world can afford, to make a man contented and happy, found by experience that all his pursuit of happiness in earthly enjoyments was completely vain, and produced, not the happiness he sought, but "vexation of mind."

No, if, possessing everything in this world, you were to seek your happiness therein, you could not succeed in finding the object of your pursuit ; but you would find misery instead of happiness. Your own experience would force you to exclaim, "On the very tree which my own hands have planted for myself, there grows a thorn which pierces me to the heart, and behold I bleed !"

Now, why is this ? It is because created things can never satisfy the desires of your soul ; they can never supply your wants ; and therefore they can never make you happy.

Where, then, are you to find that, which, as you have seen, nothing of this world can bestow ? What is it that will satisfy your desires, and make you happy ? What is it that will set your mind and heart at rest ?

You may take it for a certain truth, that nothing whatever, unless it be boundless and endless, can ever content your mind ; less than this will never satisfy the desires of your soul ; because your desires are boundless, and your wants are endless. In order, therefore, to satisfy your wants ; in order to set your mind and your heart at rest, you must seek and obtain an object that is also boundless ; one that is unlimited and imperishable, as are the capacities of your immortal soul. And that object, as you

well know, is the God that made you : it is only in seeking and obtaining Him—it is only in uniting yourselves with Him (here, in loving and serving Him, and hereafter in loving, possessing, and enjoying Him) ; it is only in this that you can find the peace and happiness you seek ; it is only in this that your wants and all the desires of your heart can be satisfied.

God is infinitely and eternally happy ; and He wishes you also to be happy. He wishes you to participate in *His* happiness ; this is the end for which He created you ; and you will obtain this end, if you seek your happiness in Him.

If, therefore, ascending above creatures ; above all created goods, which, as you have seen, cannot content your heart nor make you happy ; if, rising superior to all these created things, you seek your happiness in God and only in Him, you will find it : for you will be united with Him during the present life by His love, which will be perfected in heaven ; where you will be still more closely and inseparably united with Him in eternal glory, so as to become in a manner one thing with Him.

And in this union with your God, you will share in His happiness, which is infinite. Your desire of possession will then be fully satisfied, because you will possess the kingdom of God, and even possess God Himself ; which will leave nothing more to be desired, for you will share in the riches of Him who possesses all things. You will participate in His wisdom, in His power, His holiness, His glory, and in all His perfections : you will be happy with the happiness of God—completely and perfectly happy ; because in possessing God, who is your last end, you will in Him possess all things—the boundless capacities of your soul will be filled up, so that your mind and heart will be set at rest.

And you will not only *possess* all this happiness, and possess it to the fullest extent that your heart can desire ; but you will possess and enjoy it *forever* !

All this infinite, this endless happiness, I say, will be *yours*, if, raising your views above earthly things—you will give your hearts really to God, to seek your happiness according to His will ; and not according to your own will when opposed to His.

And in the meantime, while you remain in this world, you will enjoy such inward peace and happiness, such sweet consolations, as are wholly unknown to them who love and serve this world or their disorderly passions. The truth of this was experienced by St. Francis of Assisium, who found so much pleasure in saying : " My God and my all ! " that it seemed to give him a foretaste of the joys of heaven !

Do we ever hear of the votaries of this world experiencing happiness like this in their earthly enjoyments ?

On the contrary, what is more common in the world, than to hear people lamenting that they are restless and unhappy ?

All that I have been saying of the happiness of serving God, is so manifestly exemplified in the Saints who have gone before us, that the very reading of their lives seems to cry out to us, in the words of the Psalmist : " O taste and see that the Lord is sweet ! " (Ps. xxxiii. 9.) Yes, " the Lord is sweet " to them that love and serve Him. If, therefore, you will imitate the conduct of the Saints ; if, like them, you will renounce earthly attachments ; if you will prefer the love and service of God before all things, and labor diligently and fervently in the practice of virtue then *you*, like them, will taste and see that it is sweet to serve God : you will then enjoy, during life, a peace and happiness which cannot be found in creatures ; and in the life to come your peace and happiness will be perfected in the enjoyment of eternal glory.

FIFTY-FOURTH LESSON.

On Heaven.

" Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His justice." (MATT. vi. 33.)

Vain would be any attempt to describe the happiness of heaven : for this would be no less than an attempt to describe the *divine attributes*—the *infinite perfections of the Deity*.

wherein that happiness consists. As material things, which are the only objects that can be perceived by our limited senses, and are the only ones therefore from which our ideas are formed—as these material things constitute no portion of the felicity of the blessed in heaven; we must *necessarily* be incapable, not only of *describing*, but even of *conceiving* what that happiness really is: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.” (1 COR. ii. 9.)

In order, however, to form *some faint idea* of the happiness of heaven, consider that it is the glorious kingdom which our great Creator has prepared, in order to display to His beloved servants the riches of His mercy, and the bounteous effects of His power and goodness; and in which He communicates to them *Himself* in all His Majesty, and with all the charms of His infinite sweetness! Now, if the punishments which He has prepared for the wicked in hell are so very severe and intense, that it is beyond the power of man to conceive them—if the divine justice is so terrible, as to effect so much in punishing; what will not His love, His mercy, and His bounty, which (wherever man is concerned) are the dearest of the Attributes of God—what will not these effect in rewarding? If the divine love towards us could even induce *God* to become *Man*, in order to purchase the redemption of *sinner*s; what will not that same love prompt Him to do for His *faithful and beloved servants*, in manifesting to them the excess of His goodness, and in heaping upon them the riches of His bounty!

Although, *material* objects form no portion of the happiness of heaven; yet the Holy Spirit, condescending to the weakness of our limited conception, represents to us the glory of heaven under the figure of such things as we admire the most in this world.

Speaking of the heavenly Jerusalem, the sacred Text says, that its walls are of precious stones, and its streets of pure and transparent gold; that these streets are watered with the bright crystal streams of the river of the water of life, flowing from the throne of God; and that, on the banks of this river, on both

sides, grows the tree of life, yielding its fruits every month ; that there shall be no night, nor any want of sun or moon ; for, that the glory of God hath enlightened it ; that the Saints who dwell in this city shall be the sons of God, who will wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more ; but that they shall reign for ever and ever. (APOC. xxi., xxii.) In this picture, which is taken from the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of the Apocalypse, we cannot but be struck with admiration at such an assemblage of happiness, grandeur, and magnificence. Yet, however splendid, however desirable all this may appear, the happiness of the Elect does not consist in it ; for the kingdom of heaven possesses something *infinitely* more precious than all this. For there it is given to the Angels and Saints to contemplate, in the very presence of the Deity, His infinite perfections, where whatever can give them delight is presented before them all together in one assemblage of glories ! and by this blissful contemplation they are absorbed perpetually in ecstasies of delight !

Oh ! should *we*, be so happy as to arrive hereafter at that blissful abode ; we shall there be associated for ever with all these blessed spirits and saints of God, with them to enjoy this unspeakable happiness ! Yes, we shall there be associated with the Angels and Archangels, with the Cherubim and Seraphim, who are all to be our companions in glory ; with that innumerable host of sacred virgins who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth ; of generous martyrs, who, having sealed their faith with their blood, are now crowned with honor and glory by him who sitteth upon the throne ; of holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and other saints, all bearing the emblems of their victories, and with exultation singing hymns of praise to the divine Bounty ; and, above all, the Blessed Mother of the world's Redeemer—the glorious Queen of the heavenly Sion, seated on a throne of glory, exalted above the Cherubim and Seraphim.

Oh ! what an additional joy will this glorious society be to our felicity, all rejoicing at, and participating in each other's happiness as their own ! If our heart will not *then* be able to

contain its own joy, what overwhelming delight must we feel under such an accumulation of felicity!

But *that* which is the completion of the beatitude of the blessed in heaven, *that* in which their happiness essentially consists, is *the sight and possession of God Himself*. For although heaven abounds with every good, yet it possesses but one *Sovereign Good*, which is TO SEE GOD INCESSANTLY—TO BEHOLD HIM FACE TO FACE!

In this beatific vision is comprised the whole felicity of the heavenly paradise; from it, as from an inexhaustible source, every enjoyment proceeds. For, "to see the face of the living God," exclaims St. Augustine, "is the *supreme good*, the joy of the angels and of all the saints; the everlasting source of bliss, the internal and external joy that delighteth the paradise of God; the plenitude of happiness, the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding," (SOLIL. xxxvii.)

As soon, therefore, as a soul is secured in the possession and enjoyment of her God, she is sovereignly happy; and that insatiable thirst, which, in this life, was ever hurrying her forward in pursuit of happiness, is perfectly satisfied; she has obtained the object of ALL her desires.

Our delightful occupation will then be to contemplate eternally the perfections of the Almighty, whereby our souls will be overwhelmed continually with new raptures of divine love, and will be quite lost in the immensity and the incomprehensibility of their God. Oh! when will that happy moment come, which, closing our eyes for ever to this world, will open them *to see God face to face*, to behold Him arrayed in all the charms of His infinite perfections!

But, "our sojourning is prolonged" (Ps. cxix. 5); we must labor yet a little while in this land of misery, in which, however, we should always consider ourselves as pilgrims making the best of our way to our true country. We should imitate the conduct of the Jews in the longing desire which they had, during their Babylonish captivity, to return to Jerusalem. For when, sitting by the rivers of Babylon, they were asked by their conquerors to sing for them the Canticles of Sion, they wept, and exclaimed:

"How can we sing the Canticles of the Lord in a *foreign land*?" (Ps. cxxxvi.) Such ought to be our longing desire after the heavenly Jerusalem; for which we should consider the present life as merely a preparation. For this life is only a state of trial—a few days granted to us for the purpose of preparing ourselves to be admitted into the joys of the heavenly Jerusalem.

It depends, therefore, upon ourselves, with the help of God's grace (which will not be wanting), to obtain that eternal happiness intended for us.

This is a work which each of us has it in his power to accomplish; but for the accomplishment of which, vigorous and persevering endeavors to walk in the path of virtue are required from us. And can you esteem this too much, when you look forward and behold that eternal weight of glory, which is to be your recompense?

But, were even the splendor and delights of Paradise insufficient to awaken your exertions; can you be inactive, or indifferent, when you reflect that you are placed between the two extremes of being either infinitely happy, or infinitely miserable, for an endless eternity? Oh! this reflection ought to call forth your most strenuous exertions in an affair of *so great* importance!

Pursue then, the path of virtue with redoubled vigor; endeavoring so to run, that you may obtain the prize. (1 COR. ix. 24.) Seek the *kingdom of God* before all things (MT. vi. 33); and labor with your utmost diligence and perseverance, while you continue here, to secure to yourselves its future and eternal enjoyment.

FIFTY-FIFTH LESSON.

Christmas.

"A child is born to us."—ISA. ix. 6.

My dear children, Christmas is to us all and to all Christians a day of happiness and joy. In families the birthday of a child

is celebrated every year with great rejoicings ; in the same manner, and with still greater cause, the Church celebrates every year the birth of the divine Infant our Redeemer.

In those happy days of old, when, to quote the expressions of an eminent writer of the present age, the feasts of the Holy Church were looked upon as belonging to each Christian family, then indeed was Christmas a chosen time for family meetings and rejoicings. On returning from midnight mass and adoring the holy infant in his lowly crib at some distant village, which was lighted up by merry bonfires, what a circle of happy faces crowded round the paternal hearth, and warming themselves in the cheering blaze of the old yule log, long since chosen and set aside for the solemn anniversary, beguiled the night-long vigil, by singing in chorus many a pious canticle, the burden of which was ever and ever again :

Christmas ! Christmas !

Hail to Christmas !

And can such raptures of joy astonish us, my children ? When we remember that this day the work of our redemption began, that on this day a Saviour was born to us : we may well ask ourselves where a Christian can meet with a greater subject of joy !

We also will rejoice, and, like those good people, we also will go to church to celebrate this solemn day ; but first of all, let us prepare for so doing, by reading in the Gospel the affecting recital of the birth of our Saviour. The moment announced by the prophets for the birth of the Saviour of the world had arrived at last. The Roman emperor, Ceasar Augustus, published a decree ordering the enrolling of all the inhabitants of his empire. Each individual was obliged to return to his native town, there to set down his name and profession. Joseph and Mary left Nazareth, a town of Galilee where they lived, to go to Bethlehem the native place of David, their ancestor. There Mary gave birth to her first born, her only child Jesus our Lord and Saviour. She wrapped him up in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.

There were in the neighborhood of Bethlehem some shepherds who passed their nights in the fields, even during winter,

to guard their flocks. All at once an Angel appeared to them, and they were surrounded by a celestial light which caused them great fright. Then the Angel said: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings, which shall be of great joy to all men. For this day, in the city of David, there is born unto you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger." And at the same time a numerous troop of the celestial armies joining the Angel began to praise God singing: *Glory to God in the highest: and on earth peace to men of good will.*

As soon as the Angel had reascended to heaven, the shepherds said to one another: "Let us go to Bethlehem, to see what the Lord has ordered to be announced to us." They made great haste, and found in the stable Mary and Joseph; they also found the infant Jesus laid in the manger. On seeing him, they recognized the truth of what had been told them about this child, and afterwards all those who heard mention made of him, wondered at what the shepherds related. After adoring the divine child, the shepherds went back to their flocks, praising and glorifying God. Meanwhile Mary carefully treasured up the remembrance of all these things, and in her heart she meditated on them.

Such is, my dear children, according to the Gospel, the account of our Lord's birth. This event includes much that is surprising and mysterious: God became man, and even a little child: the king of heaven who willed to be born in a stable; Angels who celebrate this event by celestial concerts; poor people, simple shepherds, who are the first to receive the good tidings. All these mysteries are intended to convey useful lessons to our minds. It is by God's will that all this took place, and the slightest circumstances of our Lord's birth remind us, my children, that he came into this world to redeem us, to instruct us, to be loved by us.

Jesus Christ, my children, to-day receives that life which in a few years he will sacrifice on the cross for the salvation of the world. To propitiate his father's justice, it required a holier and a purer victim, than any that had been as yet offered up; then

he offered himself, and as he could not, as God, submit either to sufferings or to death, he became man, so that it might be possible for him to feel in his body those sufferings which were to redeem us from our sins ; in a few short years, this divine body will be covered with wounds, loaded with insults, nailed to a cross ! The precious blood of the Saviour will cover the earth ; but Jesus Christ will not begin to suffer only at the time of his passion. From to-day, from the first instant of his birth, he deigns to submit to the privations of poverty, to the weakness of childhood, to the inclemency of the winter season ; he has scarcely entered this world and already he suffers, he weeps for us and for our sins. He expiates our pride by his humiliations and his lowliness, our disobedience by his entire submission to his Father's will, to Mary's orders ; he is laid on straw, to expiate our fastidiousness ; and the innocent tears which, like those of any other infant coming into this world, flow abundantly down his cheeks, redeem in his Father's eyes those guilty tears which are but too often the result of our perversity. O my Saviour, shall we ever be grateful enough for so many graces ?

The infant Jesus becomes also our teacher. In a short time, my children, the sublime lessons of the Gospel will flow from his divine lips ; and even now, although he does not speak, Jesus already teaches us and preaches to us ; the sight of his humble crib says more than the most eloquent speeches. He condemns at once our vanity, our love of pleasure, and of the goods of this world ; he teaches every virtue. O my children, could you ever again be undutiful when you remember the obedience of the infant Jesus ? Could you ever again give way to feelings of pride when thinking of the humility of the infant Jesus ? Could you still be hard to the poor, vain enough to despise them, when the infant Jesus himself was poor and barely clad in mean coarse clothing.

Finally, Jesus likens himself to us, that we may cleave to him all the more. Does not every particular of his birth, make him more and more an object for love ? The graces he brings us, the sufferings he endures for our sake, and the amiable traits with which he manifests himself to us. If he had come on this

earth in all the splendor of his majesty, in all his glory, and surrounded by Angels, his grandeur might have dazzled and frightened us; perhaps we should never have dared to approach him; but he comes as a child, who smiles and calls on us—as a brother sent us by God, and who turns towards us his outstretched arms.

How happy you are, my children, still to be at that age at which the infant Jesus is more especially your friend, your model. And you too, the poor of Jesus Christ, you the first called to the manger of Bethlehem, how fully privileged you appear to me. Yes, Christmas is really your feast. In the midst of its restless pursuits, of its business, of its frivolous pleasures, the world, alas! does not pay great attention to children, or to the poor; it takes little heed of them, and even sometimes disdains them. But after all, what does it matter? The infant Jesus loves them, and to-day his highest blessings are for them.

FIFTY-SIXTH LESSON.

On Imitating Jesus Christ, By Being Meek and Humble of Heart.

“Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” (GAL. iv. 6.)

Our divine Saviour was born into this world, and dwelt amongst us, not only that He might purchase our Redemption by dying for us, but also that He might set us an example for our imitation.

We profess to be His disciples—to be His imitators; but are we really so? We know we cannot be saved without imitating Him: are we, then, already lost, because we have not imitated Him—because we have not copied His example? “Those whom God foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.” We have not been conformable: are we, then, lost? No, we are yet living, and therefore we *may* become conformable to that divine image, if we will. Let

us, then, begin in good earnest, and from this very moment : let us now, and in future, imitate the life of Jesus Christ, and then we shall be made partakers of His glory in heaven. Let us therefore be constantly striving to “do all things according to the pattern shown us on the mount.” (HEB. viii. 5.)

In what, then, must we imitate our Lord's example ? or rather, where should we *begin* ? for we have to copy *all* His virtues. Christians of every state of life will find in Him a pattern of all virtues ; but what virtues shall we begin with ? He Himself tells us : “Learn of Me,” He says (not to create the world, or to raise the dead to life ; but)—“Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.” (MT. xi. 29.) This being “meek and humble of heart” is the beginning—the foundation of all virtue. These two virtues go hand in hand : for a meek man is humble, and an humble man is meek. We may say the same of the contrary vices : for a haughty man is always proud ; and a proud man is haughty. Let us, then, “learn of Him to be meek and humble of heart.” For, though, as St. Augustine says, His whole life upon earth is an example of every virtue, His meekness and humility of heart are what He more especially calls upon us to imitate. The excellence of these two virtues, and the need we have of them, are thus rendered evident. But even if He had not expressly told us that these two virtues are what He particularly wishes us to imitate Him in ; nevertheless, in order to discover this truth, we need only consider, that the Son of God came down from heaven to teach them, not by words only, but much more by His actions ; and that His whole life was an example and living model of them. St. Basil proves this truth, by running through the whole life of Christ ; and, after having recounted the principal circumstances, from His birth to His death, He shows that all His actions serve to teach us that He was “meek and humble of heart.”

As to *Meekness*, what is the example He has given us ? The Gospel informs us how, during His whole life, He had to endure the most unrelenting persecutions and insulting outrages ; and, at the close of it, the severest torments. But He bore all this unworthy treatment not merely with patience, but with an

unspeakable meekness. He could, with the least exertion of His divine power, have cast all His persecutors at once into the bottomless abyss ; but He preferred rather to endure their malice, without any other resistance but that of meekness. He forgave them from His heart ; and even offered Himself as a victim of propitiation for them, in order to induce His heavenly Father also to forgive them. And one of His last dying words on the Cross was in favor of those very persons, who had nailed Him to it : “ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.” (Lk. xxiii. 34.)

As to *humility of heart*, His example is no less striking. He was the King of kings and Lord of lords—the great God of heaven and earth, before whom the Angels and Archangels, the Cherubim and Seraphim, fall down in silent adoration ; and yet He humbled Himself so far, for our example, as to be born of a poor mother, in a stable, as a stranger, and an outcast from society, to be “ wrapped up in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.” He submitted to be circumcised, as a sinner,—to flee into Egypt, as one forced into exile,—to be baptized among publicans and sinners, as if He were one of them. When, afterwards, the people wished to honor Him by making Him their king, He hid Himself from them ; but when they would load Him with insults and reproaches, He appeared publicly in their presence. When men praised Him, and the devils, by the mouth of the possessed, published His greatness, He commanded them to be silent ; but when they accused and condemned Him, He gave no such command. To recommend humility to us as the act of His last will, He humbled Himself at the end of His life so far as even to wash the feet of His disciples ; and crowned all these examples of humility, by voluntarily resigning Himself to die the most humiliating death of the Cross.

But, why all these humiliations, in the life of Christ ? It was, says St. Bernard, in order that no one might dare, after that, to exalt or glorify himself. Man had always been extravagant in allowing himself to be carried away with vanity ; but it would now be, says the same Saint, a thing wholly insupportable, to see a worm of the earth puffing himself up with pride, after the God of

Infinite Majesty has thus debased Himself so low for our example. The Son of God has taken the form of a servant, and chosen for Himself humiliations and contempt; and we, who are but dust and ashes, and much worse than dust and ashes, because we are sinners—we presume to seek after honor and respect, as if they were our due.

Oh what a difference between our conduct, and the example of Jesus Christ, our model! He suffered every kind of humiliation, and ill-treatment, with perfect meekness and humility of heart; but is not the least thing sufficient to wound our pride, and make us break out into complaints and ill-humor, and even revenge? The example of our blessed Redeemer teaches us how to reform our conduct; let us, therefor study His life, and learn of Him henceforth to be “meek and humble of heart.” Like Him, let us be condescending, and kind, and affable to every one, but more especially to the poor and lowly; and let us not give way to that false, mistaken, and worldly idea, that we shall thereby degrade or lower ourselves in the eyes of men. Perhaps some, indeed, may smile contemptuously at our simplicity and condescension. Well, be it so; Christ was laughed to scorn: in His condescension, meekness, and humiliations, He was contemned, despised, and laughed at. Now, “the disciple is not (or should not think of being) above his master.” (MT. x. 24.) “I am among you, as he that doth serve.” (LK. xxii. 27.) “I have given you an example, that, as I have done, so you do also.” (JOHN xiii. 15.)

Oh! let us, then, keep constantly before our eyes this divine example which our Lord has set us, and which he thus proposes to us for our imitation. Whatever may be the conduct of men in our regard—however they may treat us, let us cast our eyes upon our divine Model, who left us His example that we should follow His steps. (I PET. ii. 21.) Let us, on all occasions, and under all circumstances, “learn of Him to be meek and humble of heart.”

And let us pray that He would actuate us at all times and in all things by His spirit that it may be no longer we that live, but Christ who liveth in us.

FIFTY-SEVENTH LESSON.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

"Jesus having loved His own, who were in the world, loved them unto the end."—JOHN xiii : i.

WE honor the Heart of Jesus because it is the Heart of a God Incarnate, and this God we honor each time that we do homage to His Immaculate Heart. The Heart is the special object of our homage, because the Heart is the symbol of love, and our devotion to the Sacred Heart springs from our consciousness of the immense love with which the Sacred Heart of Jesus was animated for the whole human race. He loved them unto the end, and proved His love by dying the ignominious death of the Cross for the salvation of men.

The Heart of Jesus is free from all stain of sin. Composed of the blood of the Immaculate Mary, it was as pure as the crystal waters of living streams. Besides it was always united hypostatically with the Word and could not sin. "Who shall convince me of sin?" are the words used by our Divine Lord Himself when He challenged His enemies to convince Him of sin, to bring against Him the smallest charge. Pilate himself confessed to His innocence when he declared publicly that he found no cause in Him. Not only was Jesus free from sin, but from all temptation, from all thought of sin. He was free also from all the effects of sin, from concupiscence, and all propensity to evil. He could not sin. Although sinless He was the most humble of the children of men. He sought not His own glory, but that of His heavenly Father. His mother was a poor woman. When He grew up He chose for companions poor fishermen. He lived the life of a poor man, associating with laborers, whom He had chosen to be the ministers of the Gospel. He was also obedient to His Heavenly Father in all things. "Let this chalice pass away, but not my will but Thine be done." He obeyed a poor mechanic, Joseph the carpenter. He obeyed His enemies. When Caiaphas asked Him whether He was the Son of God, He declared that He was, and His answer cost Him His life. He was even obedient to His executioners, stretching,

at their command, His hands upon the Cross, and allowing them to be pierced through with enormous nails.

The tenderness of the Heart of Jesus is great indeed, He prayed on the Cross for those who placed them thereon. "Come to Me," He says on another occasion, "all ye that are burdened, and I will relieve you." We see Him shed tears at the tomb of Lazarus. Also as He entered Jerusalem, some few days before His Passion, He began to weep as He recalled to mind the fate of that unfortunate city, "Ah! Jerusalem, Jerusalem," exclaimed the Son of God, "how often have I wished to gather your children together, as the hen gathers her little ones, and you would not." He was truly tender-hearted. After having preached the whole day to thousands of His fellow-countrymen, He could not bear the idea of sending them away without providing for their temporal wants. Thus to feed them in the desert where they had spent hours suspended on His lips, He worked a most stupendous miracle, feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes. Let us imitate this Divine Model. Let us love one another, for we are all members of His Mystical Body, we have been all redeemed by the Blood of Christ. He prayed that we should be all one, as He and the Father are one. Do we pray that all men should be united, and embrace the one Church, that Church which Christ founded, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail? Do we set them a good example? We are not free from sin, but through the divine grace we may become saints, and bring down upon the members of the Church great blessings. We can all of us become saints. We all have at our disposal the means of sanctification, prayer, and the Sacraments of the Church, which are the channels through which the graces of God are communicated to our souls. Our Lord frequently passed whole nights in prayer. He did this to set us an example. Let us, therefore, pray and imitate Our Divine Master in all things, His humility, His patience under trials, His obedience, His charity, His meekness, and great tenderness of heart. Thus we shall honor that Divine Heart that still lives for us, and that never ceases to implore the Father of all light to have pity upon us.



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